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Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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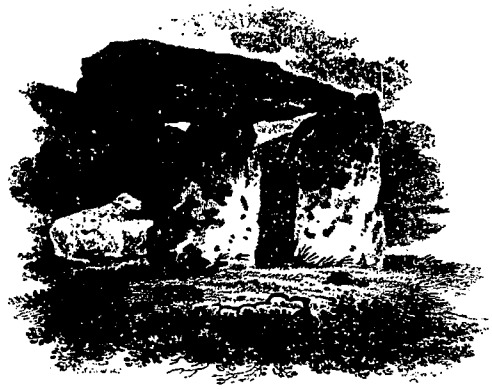

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John Stewart Carter

Enter on a Monument

I KNEW from the very beginning that it was a dream. An important dream, a dream that would recur, but a dream. In real life, life itself immediately dilutes its own fundamental reality, but in dreams this doesn't happen. Oh, the incident fades away, is dissolved in some non-narrative sequence, but for all its dissolution, it is still there ready to be dreamed again as sharply, as poignantly as before, to recur with the exactness that drowsy children washed sweet with sleep insist upon when numbed by the ritual drone of a bedtime story. Leave out an adjective, call the "little prince" but "the prince," and some heightened awareness close within the closing flower will cause them to call out, "The *little* prince. You skipped." A dream can happen—at least it has with me—as an un-dream, too, because it becomes a permanent part of the consciousness undiluted by the necessity of answering the phone, of making arrangements for the funeral, choosing a necktie, controlling the shame-darkened voice, of going immediately forward to a lived future. In a dream such as the one I am going to tell about, the dreamer is freed from space and time, and the dream itself has no grammar, its verbs no tense.

In the dream I drive up in a cab to our house, my father's house, where I lived until I was married. It is a big house, but it looks even bigger blazing with lights in the wintry dark. For some reason, I say, "In my Father's house there are many mansions," as I lean forward to pay the driver, who does not think this strange. When I look up, I see that it has begun to snow, the snow of the Christmas parties of my youth. Fitzgerald's St. Paul snow, not his Paris snow—large, wet, clinging flakes whose methodical geometry can be seen with the naked eye as they drift glistening through the bluish path the headlights make in front of us there in the December dark. A long tunnel of green canvas with a red carpet has been stretched from our front door to the curb that still has its carriage block with "Scott" cut into it as a tombstone. There is even a chauffeur posted there to open car doors. I recognise him as Joe Patera, which never was his last name, but as children we gave other people's servants the last name of the family they worked for, and while it would have astonished us to hear our own William called Bill Scott, so indeed he must have been to everyone except the people in our house. The Pateras called Joe "Joseph." The Scotts called William "William." But it is Joe who is opening car doors in the dream, and when he first appeared I hadn't seen or thought of him in many years. He was little—almost a dwarf—and he had a hunched back, the only hunchback I have ever seen from day to day over any period of time. I can see him now, a lemur, high on the open front seat of the Pateras' bottle-green and brass Pierce-Arrow limousine even though his final reality must be not only now but forever at the tombstone end of an awning, opening the doors (at this date Grandmama, Papa, Mother—all would have

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said "the doors of motors") of cars arriving for a party—a service I am sure he never performed for us.

The carriage block—it, like Joe, had disappeared by the time I was six or seven—is not too high for the taxi in which I arrive, and this disturbs me. My twenty-year-old limbs—for I am that age in the cab—carry within them the leggy memory of having to step up from the running boards of Marmons, Packards, even high Locomobiles. I am amazed to step level with the block and look back at the cab. Gold letters, cursive, curled on the black side, say "A. Zeller." At the very first there were Zeller cabs, then F.O.B. (Friar, Olsen, and Banholzer we were proud of knowing—"Guess what F.O.B. means! Just guess once! Please just guess.") and finally plain Yellows and Checkers. But Checkers were never quite respectable, and if we were sent up to the Boulevard to hail one, we were always told, "Not a Checker." A. Zeller must have vanished before I was in first grade, but my legs remembered, my dream legs recalled that his running boards were level with our block. I don't suppose I could have been in a cab even a half-dozen times before that. Joe speaks to me and I speak to him.

"Big party tonight, Joe?"

"Miss Constance. She sure is a beautiful young lady."

Constance was my Uncle Fred's—my oldest uncle's—daughter and I never had any memory of her at all. There was just what people had said to go on. At sixteen she had gone out in the afternoon, had her hair done—odd in itself because in those days hairdressers came to the house—come home, and put on her first evening dress. She had arranged herself then on her mother's and father's bed and cut her throat. Ophelia was always Constance to me, although there was no hint of a love affair and no one ever assigned any reason for her action. Her story didn't enter into the consciousness of the dream, and so it doesn't seem strange that we are giving an elaborate party for a girl who, had she lived, would be almost old enough to be my mother. Remembering the dream, though, I can feel my feet cold on the carriage-block tombstone as I look toward the front-door end of the awning tunnel. Outside the snow is heavier now and is beginning to pack.

LONG AFTER the dream, the dream itself came back—rehappened in life, if you want to say it that way. My Uncle Fred and Aunt Maud outlived four of their five children, and at the end of the forties, Fred was buried on the day my cousin Corinne and I noticed for the first time that the winding roads of the cemetery had been marked with arrows "One Way." "More arrows for Sebastian," one of us said, for he was a character we had instinctively despised from the moment we came across him in an art book. It was late in May, a muggy afternoon, and there had been violent thunder showers all morning, so the undertakers had set up a large marquee across the graves and provided a green awning with a carpet from the road up the hill to the flattened top of the knoll where the robber baron's marble obelisk rises above the black slabs that memorialise his descendants. Pete, my cousin Pete, exploded high in the air and his bones even then were whitening shards in a Burmese jungle. Harrison lies beneath the icy waters of the Murmansk run, iron-locked forever behind a bolt compartment door. But they have their slabs, polished, deep-cut with their names, the stated limits of their little time.

I don't think I remembered the dream as we stood for the graveside service, for I remember smiling when the minister said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions," and my brother Gordie whispering, "It's a good thing. Fred's counting on that." My father must have heard Gordie because he said as we stood around afterwards, "No, Fred certainly wasn't the ranch-type type. Or even split-level." We stood about afterwards for a few minutes because at "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," the heavens opened and thunder rolled over us in great grinding rushes so loud that the minister's final words were lost and the last of the service was pantomimed in the dark

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like a flickering silent movie. When it was over, his robes billowing crazily about him, he walked across to my Aunt Maud, old, tiny, cowering in her remaining Benjie's huge black arm, and we all waited to see what she wanted to do—go towards the cars in the downpour or wait under the marquee. Slowly she turned, still with Benjie's arm about her, and they walked down the hemp carpet stretched beneath the awning tunnel. We were right behind them when they got to the car, and I saw her take off her furs and hand them to Benjie. My eyes met hers then, and their lost loneliness was so fierce, so overpowering that I had to look away. A great fork of lightning clawed the split sky, and a gust of wind sucked the rain under the awning that strained and flapped heavily against its guy ropes. Everyone—even Maud herself—looked back to make sure that the big billowing marquee had withstood the onslaught. I saw the shoulders of her black silk suit were wet, and because I was still avoiding her eyes, I noticed that the diamond pin she wore on her lapel was bright with water. It was a snowflake.

We got into the cars just as they drove up after that. The weather made it impossible to sort ourselves into our married families, so my mother, father, Gordie, and my youngest brother, Lee, were together, leaving our wives and our cousin Corinne to follow in Uncle Tom's car, which was next in line. It was then I first knew that it was the dream I was living. The awning tunnel, the graveyard scene hadn't done it, but the sight of Maud's pin, which I had never even seen, had caused the dream to overflow into life, giving existence to its anticipations. I heard my mother say to my father, "Did you see what Maud was wearing?"

"I sure did."

"Odd. I haven't thought of it in all this time."

"I have. Not often, but I have. I've never seen her wear it though. I unpinned it from Connie's dress that night. The little green-apple breasts. And those things were called 'breastpins' then. I washed the blood from it under the tap in the bathroom."

"Funny your remembering that. Yes, they were. The sunburst you gave me. That's a breastpin." Even with her own family, Mama was conscious that this was a social situation so she went on about "breastpins" and dropped the reference to washing the blood from it under the bathroom tap.

The cemetery road was rolling—hilly even we would call it in the Midwest—and the headlights of the car behind us descended through the back window, dispelling for a moment the murked darkness. I saw my mother take my father's hand, and heard her say to us, not him, "We're talking about the pin Maud was wearing. So odd for a funeral, really; but you never know how long hurts last. Father, your grandfather, gave it to Connie for her sixteenth birthday, two days before she died. So odd of Maud to bring it out like that today. There was a lot of conversation about how inappropriate for a girl of sixteen"—my mother was talking against time, against the numby darkness of the limousine and my father's memory of his sixteen-year-old niece—"and I remember his saying, 'I probably won't be around to give it to her when she's eighteen, and I like it.' And this was odd, too, because of course he couldn't see it. But it's a lovely pin, I will say. Not big stones, but Cartier, so you can't see any of the setting at all. No prongs. Nothing. Smooth as silk. I suppose he could feel that, you know."

My mother could have kept on like this all the way home, but the car with Maud and Benjie had come to the Styx, which is what we called the little river that separated the east from the west side of the cemetery. Spring had brought the river high so that the tinny, rattly bridge that crossed the stream looked insubstantial above the rain-wet clayey waters. Maud's car stopped, and the lights of ours crowded up its back. At first we thought something was wrong with the bridge, but Benjie got out, a great crow in his too-tight morning coat and silk hat, slopping and flopping back to us.

"Uncle Doc! Uncle Doc! Something's happened to Mother! Come quick. She was crying and then she wasn't." Benjie was in

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his late forties, but he talked like a little boy. It was a choirboy's voice, too, for all his enormous bulk.

My father grabbed my mother's bag—he always had nitroglycerin ampoules—and was wading up the road to the car. Benjie had left the door open, so the light streamed out on the gray gravel to the brightened green grass beyond. Maud lay, terribly tiny, on the big seat, the snowflake glistening, still wet with rain, her glassy eyes still wet with tears. Papa got in beside her, although he must have known she was dead, and pulled down the jump seat to work on her. He broke the nitroglycerin under her nose, and Benjie and I drew our heads from the car in revulsion at the clinging, acrid sweetness of its smell. By that time Tom's chauffeur, Taylor, had been sent ahead to us, but he came up on the other side of the car, so it was Papa who spoke to him and asked him and Arnold, Maud's chauffeur, to go up the line and stop other people from getting out. All up the road you could see the monstrous, lighted snake of cars curled among the Doré vaults, Piranesi columns, Daumier tombstones of the neighbour dead. Papa moved efficiently, methodically, doing what had to be done, and then turned to us.

"She's gone, Benjie. There's nothing I can do. There's nothing anybody can do. I think we might just as well take her to Ashenbrenner's just like this." Benjie looked stupid and frightened, so Papa said, "Get in our car. I'll ride with her. But it was easy, boy, and not sad. Not sad at all, you know. Remember your dad." Fred had been in pain that even massive doses of morphine could not control for over a year.

Both Benjie and I were soaked, standing there, the rain dripping from our stiff, ceremonial hats, the archaic padding of our coats heavy with water. Papa twisted himself quickly from the jump seat, which slowly folded up, and was beside us. His fingers took Benjie's limp wrists to feel his pulse, and he said again, "Go back in our car. You're not a boy any more. No use taking chances." Benjie moved in a trance toward our headlights, not even grateful to Papa for the excuse he had handed him. I offered to go with Papa, but he shook his head. "No. This is to be between Maudie and me, I guess."

I HELPED HIM into the car and watched him as he slipped his arm under Maud—Oh, the practice of that arm, when you were sick, under your shoulders. So sure of itself. So much better than any nurse's. The two of them sat there like lovers, Maud's tiny head on his shoulder. For some reason or other, he reached over and took off her hat even before he closed her glaucous eyes with his thumb and middle finger. Even before, tenderly with his whole hand cupped, he closed her slackened jaw. I heard him say just as he would have to us as children after the setting of a bone, the lancing of a boil, "Well that wasn't so bad, was it, Maudie old girl? Much easier than lots. You needed something easy for a change." Arnold came back then, and I closed the door, leaving them in the dark. I had to walk around to the other side of the car to tell Arnold to take them to Piperson's. Papa had said "Ashenbrenner's" and that's what we all said, but it was Piperson's. Willie Ashenbrenner—Wilma—was a girl we all had known years ago, and when I was about nine she had married an undertaker named, to our delight, Tom Piperson. I have a long poem about it, "Historic America." It was a famous *mésalliance*, and I remember my grandmother's saying to my mother, "A woman has a right to her husband's position, but a husband never takes his wife's." I also remember the rest of the exchange.

"Oh Mama, I wish you wouldn't talk like that in front of the children. It gives them such wrong ideas."

"Well, it's better to have wrong ideas that are right, than right ideas that are wrong like silly Willie Ashenbrenner." In fairness to Grandmama, I know I should say that when it came to putting the screws on Willie—for put the screws on, they all sure did—she was less relentless than Mother. Anyway, when Willie inherited the Ashenbrenners' big house, instead of selling the land for an apartment house site as the rest of us were

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beginning to do, Tom Piperson had invented —really, I think so—the idea of a "Funeral Home," and had turned the house into the first I ever knew of. My father, of course, had a great deal more to do with undertakers than most people, yet even he—no matter how often he saw Tom Piperson, no matter how successful Tom became—still spoke of "Ashenbrenner's." I had noticed wryly at the funeral how smooth and perfect Tom Piperson's morning coat was—not at all like ours, which had been bought years ago when we were getting married and being ushers at weddings but now were stretched tight across our backs and cut into our armpits. My trousers even had buttons, not a zipper on the fly, and I couldn't button the top one at all. Undertakers, I suppose, continued to wear morning coats to funerals for a few years after this, but I haven't had one on since Fred's.

The car pulled away then, and I waded back towards ours on the slicked, unsure gravel of the road. It took a matter of two or three minutes, so our car became the head of the rolling dragon-snake stretched memorially behind us, linked with lights, that crawled winding until it reached the cemetery gates and dismembered itself—each part, like a worm, coming to a new life as it swung into the larger traffic of the public road.

GRANDPAPA'S fly had always been buttoned—and unbuttoned—never zippered, and fifty of us there that day—the four remaining of the ten sons, grandchildren, great-grandchildren—grown and zippered, never buttoned, for the great-grandchildren had no morning clothes—had proceeded from his loins. I give you joy of the worm, old goat. "Enter on a Monument." Buttoned. Oh so tender-buttoned during life, now perdurable in marble against a lightning-cloven sky. I looked back. Stark, proud, erect in thrust above long-mouldered death. And Papa —zippered? buttoned?—with death already close beside him, speeding away ahead of us, the vast tenderness of his freckled arms! Unafraid, my papa. Used to death. Two syllables. Who the hell did I think I was? Walt Whitman? Acquainted with grief. Heavy on the second beat and in the past tense like the *Messiah*. That great blubbering ox, my cousin Benjie, his eyes more sheened with wetty tears than his mother's with death. His heavy red hand under my mother's black kid clasp, bumpy with rings.

The Red and the Black, my mother always called us, and indeed it was spectacular how we all conformed to type. My grandfather had married twice. First his own Scott cousin, and upon her death, her niece—again his cousin—my grandmother. Four of the ten sons were Red, like my father, enormously freckled under the whitest of skins, and their eyes were heavy brown. The rest were Black. But the Black had the eyes of blonds, and this was very beautiful in people like Grandmama and Corinne. In the next generation, Benjie was Red, and I was Black. I always wanted to be Red like Papa, and once when I wanted it so fiercely and I was little, he had said to me, "I can tell you this, if it's any comfort to you—and it shouldn't be—the Black are more largely hung." I was so little I didn't know what this meant, but I asked my Uncle Tom (Red, too) who was so much younger than Papa and never minded your not knowing things. He told me.

I soared with rage against Benjie now. No, he could not ride his mother dead to Ashenbrenner's, Silly Willie Ashenbrenner's. This fat segment of worm. Nearly fifty years old and still not alive enough by himself to rise from his wallow and lead the parade—hip! hip! hooray!—his arm about the woman who had borne him Red. I wasn't much of a one to talk, I knew. I had little enough feeling for the pangs of birth. The fruit-of-the-womb business never really moved me. It was just a place you'd once been like a house taken in Florida or Majorca for nine months. Had the robber baron understood the phallic magnificence of the obelisk? In the winding, falling, rising of the snake we had come to the spot where we could see it last, black in the rain. Probably not. In those days, no one would have, but had it marked me? Probably. Probably. I shook my head. Violently, I guess, for my brother Lee said, "What are you twitching for?"

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I was able to answer him—"I was just thinking of Papa"—and I began to remember that Papa himself would be incapable of my rage towards Benjie, would be able to say, "Benjie is Benjie. The Benjamin of an old man who was my brother."

When my grandmother died, Fred had taken over the house in town. It was the last of the houses the family owned there—the rest of us had moved to the suburbs, to apartments—but it had been Fred's mother's house much more than it had ever been Grandmama's, and he had bought it from the estate. Fred, too, remembered his own mother more than the others, although, in truth, Grandmama had reared—the word she would have used—all the boys. Grandmama had the house in the country. It had been built for her as a bride, but Fred and the older boys had been brought up in town. When they went to the country, they went to the farmhouse. Ironically, the farmhouse still stands and my cousin Edith lives a chintzy, Better Homes and Gardens sort of life in it, but the big country house—so much more of a city house than the house in town—is gone. The house in town is gone now, too, but it stood at the time of Fred's funeral on enormously valuable land perpetually in the shadows by day, blazing with lights, reflected from the heavy buildings that surrounded it, by night. I haven't called it a town house because it never was that. It had been built in what was once a suburb—a fifteen-minute carriage ride from the bank. I know it would take a half an hour in a taxi through traffic today. It stood in its own yard and garden still, with a *porte-cochère*, a drive, a tennis court, and big carriage houses long since converted into garages across the back.

Grandmama and Fred after her had always kept the house up, and as we drove in that day in the heavy rain, it looked like the kind of awninged, flower-boxed, rustic "cottage" that people once built in Maine or along Long Island Sound. "158" was what we called it because of its street address, but Idlewild or The Elms would have been more appropriate. When we were children, we used to stand behind the bridalwreath hedge that lined the iron spiked fence and watch the rubberneck buses draw up in front while the guide megaphoned its—and our—splendours. I don't suppose any of us ever imagined the women in from the farms, the schoolteachers from the little cities of the veritable, not metaphoric plains, who sat on the rattan seats sticky with varnish, along with their dressed-up children and captive males. We met the women later in Ruth Suckow and Willa Cather, but no one I think has ever done one of the meekened men, and he's hard now to imagine. Then, we knew nothing whatever about life on the other side of the iron spiked fence from which an incomparably adenoidal voice bawled:

"Thirty-five rooms"—twenty-two by actual count—"the Entire Third Floor is a Ball Room with a Separate"—he said, "Sep-A-Rat," which is how I learned to spell the word—"Supper Room with a Complete Kitchen." There was a stove in a kind of pantry connected with the downstairs kitchen by a dumbwaiter. My father had marvellous tales of how he and his brothers used to ride it until, for that reason, it was taken out. In our day, it was just a scary hole you could look down but which was no good for spitting. Sunday afternoons were long when we were children, and in all houses—even Grandmama's—we used to spit down the clothes chutes at one another, the object being the eye. Ingmar Bergman could make quite a thing of it. As far as I know, no ball was ever given in the Sep-A-Rat Ball Room after Grandmama Flora's time. Grandmama Flora was what we called our grandfather's first wife when we had occasion to refer to her; even her own children called her "Mama Flora" after they began to call Grandmama "Mama." As a matter of fact, the rubberneck barker must have had a hard time finding sufficient grandeurs, for there were no Carrara marble staircases, onyx bathtubs, or solid gold bathroom fixtures at "158" as there were at "300" where the Henrys lived. He had to settle for "The Three Stained Glass Panels on the Main Staircase are by the French Artist Gus-Tave Dar-LONG and illustrate incidents in the life of 'The Lady of the Lake,'

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a famous poem, especially imported from Paris, France, and installed here at the Cost of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars. And those were pre-War dollars, folks." I will say this for Benjie, he could do the adenoidal barker better than anyone—and without even holding his nose.

When we pulled into "158" the day of the funeral, Maud, poor Maud, had been expecting us, and there were caterer's men all over the place. She would have been pleased at the stir that arose from the arriving cousins, nieces, nephews, in-laws. Benjie himself was flushed with importance as he stood at the head of the two steps that led up to the living-room—long, low-ceilinged, bayed. No room in the house was level with another. I suppose this was considered picturesque, but it made it easy for everyone to see Benjie and gave him a chance to explain the circumstances surrounding his mother's death. In reality, however, he was completely isolated from what was actually happening. When they arrived, my Uncles Harry—Harrison, the lawyer—and Tom—the banker—went immediately to the little cupola study behind the library and began making phone calls and figuring out the legal and financial aspects of the second death. My mother and wife went into the kitchen to see about what Maud had arranged and to talk to Fred's own servants who had been at the cemetery themselves. Benjie was a kind of island in all this, and although everyone sought him out, they were more interested in seeing each other than Benjie, who had lived in New York for twenty years and whose wife hadn't come on for the funeral. Even I went to see about setting up some sort of bar because, under the circumstances, so many of the cousins had come back that the caterer's men weren't able to handle them and at the same time turn a sit-down supper for twenty-four —the tables were already set up—into a buffet of funeral baked meats for what threatened to be three times that number.

BY THE TIME my father arrived, the last party The Lady of the Lake was to look down upon was in unexpected bloom. The rain hadn't stopped, so all the lamps and lights were on, glinting against the long-polished wood, and there were enormous, heavy arrangements of flowers that Maud had decided to keep rather than send on to the funeral. Everyone was relieved not to have to sympathise with broken Maud, and all pretence that this was a house of mourning had been dropped. Papa stood for a moment dazzled by the life spread out through the downstairs rooms. Day by day for a year he'd been coming here, talking to Maud for a few minutes on his way up to Fred, maybe having a cup of coffee with her on the way down.

"Maud was bad to-day. But she won't hear of the hospital, and I don't think it has ever occurred to her that I could put a stop to it all. At least she has never asked. She'd think it was bad—wicked—you know, and when she feels like that, you just can't." My mother was a great believer in euthanasia and would say, "But it is Fred who has the pain. Not Maud," but Papa would just shrug and say, "When pain's gone on that long, it's a kind of life." A great believer in life, my papa, Even the unexamined life. But I could feel him bridle at the life that had suddenly spilled over the long-numbed house, and he said to me, "Get Benjie and bring him up to the Poop. I've got to talk to him."

The Poop—poop deck—was what they had always called the room over the *porte-cochère*. It was all leaded glass that through the years had stretched and buckled. Palms were in each of the four corners. Before Grandmama died the palms had grown in Chinese *jardinières* which I never really looked at until after they had been left to the Art Institute and were put on display there. Fred still had the palms, but they were in hideous brass jugs he'd bought once in Benares. The whole room was fitted with a tightly tufted, upholstered velvet window seat that ran around three sides. There was no other furniture except for a large table in the centre where there were usually magazines but which to-day held an enormous bouquet of American Beauty roses. We used to kneel on the window seat as children to

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look down the drive. It was also a good room to play doctor in because you could hear anyone coming on the stairs before they could see you—an important consideration in a life as fully chaperoned as ours.

What Papa had to tell Benjie was that he had arranged graveside services for Maud at ten the next morning, that there would be no announcements until afterwards, and that Benjie should tell the cousinage that they didn't have to feel that they must come back for the new services. He also told Benjie that we would spend the night there to be on hand. Benjie seemed relieved, and with a new topic of conversation, went down renewed to the party.

Most of the bedrooms in the house had been closed for years, but after dinner my mother got three ready for us. Our wives went back to the country to be with our children, but that left my mother, my cousin Corinne, my two brothers, Papa, and me. Gordie and Lee took one room, Mother and Corinne another. Benjie had his own room, and that left the third room for Papa and me. In all that house there was not one room with twin beds, so for the first and only time in my life I slept with my father.

I suppose it was nearly eleven when we all finally went upstairs. We sat with Benjie for a while after the others left, but there wasn't very much to say, and we were really grateful that Harrison and Tom had so much for him to sign. It was understood that Tom should take Fred's place in the bank—he had been doing the actual work for three years—and it would probably be necessary for Benjie to return to Chicago. He could easily use his father's place in the country to live in the year round, and there was no question but that "158" had outlived its usefulness even thirty years ago. Fred had never collected things as Grandmama and Grandfather had, so there was nothing of great value there except things in which he had only a life interest. I don't think Benjie himself had any affection for either the house or any of its furnishings. He was polite and invited us each to choose something before it was inventoried. Actually I took a Chinese porcelain vase that I once used in a poem—"Chinoiserie: Mr. De Paolis long after Gautier"—although I didn't explain the reason. Benjie himself, we knew all along, was going to be very rich, but what he would do with the money or even why he would want it, I don't think even he could have said. I'm sure he had no feeling for money as power; he had no children, no expensive tastes, and although he did not get along with his wife, they had been married almost twenty years, and he could have kept a dozen women in extravagant style at any time. But Benjie was not a wanter.

I SPOKE TO Papa about this, and he said, "Well, he's a not-wanter then. You and I are such intense wanters that it's hard for us to know about other people. It isn't wanting what you have that counts. It's wanting something beyond. Always wanting. The Spartan boy with the fox at his vitals. Although I must say there wasn't anything particularly Spartan about the way you cabbaged-on to that vase."

I was really taken aback. Long ago I had learned Papa was apt to know my motives better than I, but I thought myself innocent in choosing the vase, so I said, "Is it very valuable? Was I really greedy?"

He looked at me slyly and shrugged. "Probably. Things beautiful and rare usually are —as you very well know."

"I'm sorry. You make me ashamed. I took it because it was in a poem of mine. I didn't think of its value."

He relented. "I recognised that. It's a good poem, too. At least I like it. But it's greedy. A greedy poem." I knew what he meant in a way, and he knew that I knew. He didn't as a rule comment on what I wrote. He'd hand me back a poem and say, "I like that very much," or he'd tell me what he knew about something in the poem to indicate that he felt the force of the image. "There's nothing so white as a trillium," he said when he read "Dawn Song." I had been afraid to emphasise the whiteness of that trillium within the poem for fear of smudging it; but

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oh, how I had wanted it seen, and I glowed with pleasure when Papa spoke. But usually it was a long time later that he'd mention a poem, use it as an illustration, and I'd know it had clung to his mind. This was wonderful of him, really, for he knew more poetry by heart than anyone I ever knew, and to hear myself used as he'd use Keats or Shakespeare always made my heart sing.

"You spend a good many more hours in museums than most people. You're knowledgeable, aren't you? Did you ever see that vase before?"

"No. I suppose not. Not that *particular* vase." I heard my own tone of voice on *particular*. It was my little-boy voice. The voice of a little boy being serious and exact.

"That's why you asked for it, you see. You've already got a poem out of it. The poem's unique"—Papa always used words like *unique* exactly—"but that wasn't enough, you wanter, you. You wanted, really wanted, the tangible, the valuable fact. 'The blow of flowering peach'—writing that wouldn't do when you had a chance to have the vase, which is far more fragile, in your greedy, even grubby, hands."

"What about your bronze?" Papa had taken a small, ten-inch bronze of an old man —presumably Ulysses but maybe Prospero— lying on his side exhausted, naked, washed to some final beach. At least there's a tiny conch shell at his feet, and the base is swirled to suggest seaweed or waves. His beard, come to think of it, is matted, too, as if by salt water. It had always been kept—as a paperweight, really—on the desk in the study behind the library.

"Oh, I didn't say I wasn't greedy. That I wasn't a wanter. I just said you should know that you were. I studied for my State Boards in that room one July when everyone else was in the country and I was alone. I'd mark incisions on his belly, his back, and wipe them off with the sweaty fat of my thumb. I operated on him for everything in the calendar. His trunk, you know, is long for his legs. A prime hernia suspect. And when I wasn't operating on him, but just reading, after a while I'd find my pencil tapping, tapping on that minutely long foreskin. Many a reflective pencil I've broken between his bronze-green thighs. They had a firmness surprising in so old a man."

Papa's voice faded towards the end of this, but I didn't want to lose him to these memories, so I said, "Why didn't you ask for it before? Fred, Maud, Grandmama herself —anybody'd have given it to you. You could have just put it in your pocket and taken it."

Papa looked startled; his voice came back. "I never thought of it until to-night, and then I knew that's what I wanted. God knows I've explored enough prostates, removed enough kidneys to have forgotten the half-drowned man—the half-drowned man who kept me company when I was twenty." He laughed self-consciously. "The heat of that summer. The heats for that matter, too." Papa's voice faded again, but I didn't have to bring him back this time. He shook his head. You could actually see the effort of will it took to return from the still private past to me, his son. His tone was strangely defensive as he went on, "But to-night I wanted him. There's something tactile about all this. I think I have always wanted to touch." He looked down at his hands. White as milk, the tannish freckles blotching underneath. To see him wash them, even at home, was to see a sacrificial rite, a veritable ablution. He'd scrub each finger separately as if for surgery. The water'd be so hot that as children we couldn't believe it. And after his hands were scrubbed, he'd rinse them, and then fill up the bowl again, massaging the now pink hands with fresh soap. When we'd ask him "Why," he'd say, "An act of prayer, boys, an act of prayer. Come on." And we'd give him up our little-fingered hands—Gordie from one side of the bowl, I from the other, reaching up because we were very little. He'd take them between his enormous, firm palms and rub them together, slippery with soap. Together, until you couldn't tell whose slithery fingers were whose. We'd giggle, Gordie and I, giggle with joy and adoration. There were so many stubby fingers there, crushed soft and loved and tickled. Yes, even little we were a tactile lot. Papa instead of

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going into the bank went into people's insides and cut away the rot and put them back together again. Gordie and I tried to get inside people's minds. We were always copping metaphoric feels. And the funny thing is you can either put it that way—as low, as vulgar as you like—or you can see yourself as God up there on the Michelangelo ceiling reaching out a yearning finger to mankind.

BY THIS TIME Papa and I were in the big bedroom that once had been Grandmama's and in which we were to spend the night. Fred and Maud had never used the room, preferring its architectural twin, where Fred was to die, on the quieter side of the house. Most of the house was really in Grandmother Flora's taste, but my real grandmother had done this room over for herself, and it was grand, elegant in the French Manner while the other rooms were merely luxurious. There was an Aubusson carpet, a small Venetian chandelier of massed, pale-pink wild poppies flecked with gold, and a big caned and ribbon-carved bed of rubbed gilt on a low dais. The bed was hung with a thin blue-green silk, brocaded with loosely strewn poppies, and the curtains, sofas, and chairs were covered with the same stuff. "Sumptuous" was the word that came to mind when you first saw it, but it was really more than that when quietly the detail emerged. Critics, I know, have criticised Edith Wharton for what they call her Woman's Magazine habit of describing interiors, but in the days before interior decorators such rooms were a key to character, and Lily Bart looking down from the stairs at Bellemont—"The hall was arcaded, with a gallery supported on columns of pale yellow marble"—is quite a sight. Life, in the act of seeing, is seen. I like people to see where I am, too, and to know that I see as I saw that night. The wheat-coloured carpet, the dark pearwood panelling, the pink poppies and the faded blue-green silk—these, anyone could see, and they were immediately beautiful. After you'd been there awhile, though, you became conscious of the eye that had been aware of the relationship between the colour of the silk and the marble facing around the fireplace, so different in texture from that of the cloth. The marble was verd antique and in its green, mottled depths you could see—if only you would look—the shimmer of a long-dead, miraculous blue, and you could trace in its dimness the finest random threads of scarlet. The andirons were brass peacocks, and that's what Lee asked for, although I knew his wife would hate them.

All the doors in the room—to the dressing-room, the bathroom, the closet, even the door into the hall—matched the lustrous panelling of the walls so exactly that when they were all closed there was no visual way out.

"I can't stand this," Papa said. "I never could." He opened the double panels to the dressing-room and turned on the light there. The dressing-room was all mirrors, reflecting in themselves back and forth, back and forth. It's a funny thing; I had these mirrors when I wrote "Kitchen Klenzer"—which is about reflections of reflections—but I didn't use them. The cook looking into the polished pan, the pan repeating the aproned cook were easier to deal with than the cut-glass dazzle of that cave.

Actually as children we were never much at the house in town, and as we grew older we seldom went upstairs at all. We knew Grandmama chiefly in the country, which with the years grew closer and closer to town, so that apart from an odd night now and then, Grandmama herself spent no more than a few weeks a year at "158." I mentioned this to Papa now and said, "Much of this is new to me, you know. When I was a kid I suppose I saw it, but I didn't see it with the eyes I have now. It's just there, dusky in the past. I suppose I would have known the room was beautiful, but I couldn't have said why. I've often wondered where she got her taste. Surely she wasn't educated? Women weren't, then." What I was saying was disconnected because I was wandering about *touching* things. "God, those poppies are marvellous. When you think

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what you can buy in Venice, in Murano, when all you have is money."

"I don't know how much she knew. I never did know. Partly of course it was the Galeries Charpentier and an instinct for the valuable. I don't think she ever bought even a new painter who didn't sometime make it. A kind of molecular attraction, you could call it, to the supremely successful." I could tell Papa was pleased by being with me, and proud of his phrasing. His eyes gleamed, and he went on. "Most of it must have been herself. Sometimes I think I must admire her taste just because it formed mine, you know?"

"I know. God knows I know. I get sick from knowing." My thumb was working on the chiselled edge of a poppy twisted from bronze into a drawer-pull. "People don't like this sort of thing now. Grace is going to hate those god-damned peacocks. White paint. Cheer. Chintz. That's what I ought to be liking. Or, bringing the outdoors indoors. Glass. Vacancy. Pre-Columbian sculpture. Masks. Oh, no. Not for me. Give me"—I threw my arms wide. With Papa I could do things like that—"Coromandel."

My tongue made love to the word because I was happy too, and Papa heard the happiness because he said, "It sure sounds good. You know about the pictures, don't you?"

"What about them?" There were no pictures on the wall now at all.

"She changed them. What was hung was something they were thinking of buying, and they liked to look and look and look at it beforehand. Then when they'd decided, the picture'd go to wherever they were buying it for."

"Do you think she knew about the 'No Exit' feature of the joint?"

Papa laughed and said he didn't think so, that her mind hadn't functioned in that way, that it hadn't been symbolic; so I told him about thinking of the obelisk in the cemetery which made him laugh even more. Then, I didn't really know why, but I did later, he told me about having the measles.

HE'D BEEN very sick with them, and not an inch of his body had escaped. They had even infested his mouth and had climbed beneath his then flaming hair, "but were redder even than that." During the day he'd been allowed in his mother's room—this room—and had slept there dozing fitfully, feverishly, on and off until he was transferred at night back to his bed. One day at the height of his infection, his mother was going to the opening of the opera, and Fisher, her maid, came in with the boxes of the big party jewellery that had come in from the bank. He asked to play with it, so Fisher put the boxes on the bed and went to tell Grandmama. They kept the room dark because of his eyes, but he could see the pieces well enough, and by the time Grandmama got there, his arms were heavy with the too-big bracelets, his fingers hooped with the too-big rings, and his neck ablaze with twisted diamonds and emeralds. He pinned the big elaborate brooches to his nightgown, whose flannelette was too light to hold their weight, and they pulled it forward on his skinny red neck, turning in on each other. Finally, on top of his eight-year-old curls, he set the diamond tiara that had been his mother's wedding present. "I thought I was King of the World, then, or Queen—I don't think I made any distinction. I held my neck high, the golden settings cool against its hotness"—oh my papa could talk—"and I thought, If I had a whip, I'd whip my slaves."

When Grandmama came in, she sat on the foot of the bed, and he thought he remembered that her eyes began to glisten in the dark with tears. She took his hand which was really all rings, and he knew that what she said was "My poor little measle." Then she put the palm of her hand on his hot measled chest and said something about his being all uncovered. She tried to pull up his nightgown from the back, but the pins clattered together in a lump and just pulled it down again, so she had said, "Come on, let's take them off. It can't be very comfortable."

"Oh no, Mama. I'm King of the World. Emperor of the Universe." Although Papa was in his late fifties when he told me the story, I could see the gesture, the sweep of the little-boy arm that half a century later

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was to become the arc, palm spread down, of the man's. I was fascinated by what he was telling me. You almost never know anything like this about anyone except yourself, and the thought that he should tell me it—here in that room of the caned and carved bed with the poppied damask—filled me with wonder. I knew, somehow, that it must be central to life—all life or just Papa's, I couldn't tell—to existence. Normally, even as he spoke, I would have been conscious of a gnawing curiosity, not for the outcome of the story but about how, when I came to write, I would use the details. There then that night, the details were using me, and what I can only explain as a kind of hush of spirit came over me. I listened and waited while Papa's voice washed over me telling me how he asked Grandmama for a looking-glass and that at first she tried to dissuade him but finally had opened the dressing-room door's mirrored back. This wasn't enough, and reluctantly she brought him the hand glass. "I peered into it in the dark, but I suppose my eyes were really feeble. It was as if the glass were covered with silk, and I begged for lights. Again she demurred, but I said 'Please, please.' It seems to me I remember the quietness with which she rose and stepped down and across the room to the windows. I know I can see her now with lace at the cuffs and throat. She raised her arm to pull back the pale blue-green poppied silk, and a shaft of November sunshine showed me the disease I had forgotten in my visions of splendour. I was—and I can laugh now—nothing but her poor little measle. Then, I wept. Salt tears on a measled face. Many things are hard to forgive Mama, but she always knew about boys—and men. I can feel her hands stripping the loose rings in kindliness from my limp, aching-sad fingers, slipping the clattery bracelets from my enervated arms, unpinning the heavy brooches, unwinding the scratchy diamonds from my neck, lifting the crown of the Emperor of the Universe from my head. All without a word. And the kiss without recoil on my measled mouth. You know, don't you, I think that's why you, Gordie, and Lee have never had the measles? I had them so bad that you were immune."

"But we weren't immune from wanting?"

"No, I guess there's no immunity from that."

Papa went out a few minutes afterwards to see about Benjie, give him a sedative, get us some of Fred's pyjamas, and to say goodnight to the others. Papa always "wandered." This was Mama's word to describe how he'd walk around the house when everybody else was in bed. Everybody had to be down, the house his alone, before he'd begin. Then he'd go from room to room, at first turning off lights, but afterwards just wandering in the dark, with his heart alive in the silence. As he left that night he said, "I'll leave the door open," and it was a help to see the big hall stretch out in its darkness, the Poop, half-way down the stairs, like a jewel-box of crumpled, refracting glass alive with the reflected street-lights. The intimacy of the story flowed out, as it were. I know that it would embarrass Papa, in the same fashion as ordinary mortals are supposed to be embarrassed at telling the facts of life to their sons, if he had been shut with me immediately afterwards in that No Exit room. I stepped into the hall myself as if to break the spell, and breathed in the scent of the now wilting funeral flowers—"enpurpled roses, heavy-limp on closing stems" was a line I made up. I've never used it; it really isn't my poetic style, but if I do, it will be my standing there in the shadowed quiet of the hall. I think the poem would be faked, though, because in spite of the mortal hush of the last hours of Grandmama Flora's house, I could literally feel my eardrums beat, throb. I knew what I was listening for was some last echo of four or so of the boys on a Sunday afternoon, brothers red and black, around the piano that Maud played with boarding-school trills as they sang "Far above Cayuga's Waters"—"Our best number because none of us ever went there." Sometimes—but only sometimes—Mama from the couch across the room would join in. Soft, clear, aching sweet she'd take a soprano obbligato to soar high above them.

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I left the hall then and hurried through the room and the dressing-room to turn on the bath. This is the sort of thing I meant when I said that in life as opposed to dreams reality always dilutes the moment. I wanted to be finished in the bathroom before Papa got back so that he wouldn't have to wait. Papa wasn't a good *waiter*. I could have told him. The poem I might have let have its way with me in the shadowed hall was gone, and the really fantastic post-impressionist scene that might have ballooned in the multiple harsh reflections of the dressing-room never arose. The glasses held only my hairy, already faintly potbellied nakedness in their glaring surfaces. Of course I looked, but I didn't gaze as I might once have done. Narcissus was thirty-five. I did—and I suppose I have to tell this—lean over and parting the cheeks of my own now nearly assless ass saw for the only time its essential orifice. In the tub—there was no shower—I let the warm water take over and lay in lassitude, the tiredness of the day crowding in on me. Of course as I washed myself—slithery, slippery worm in soapy hands—I thought of Grandpapa in the same tub and how, really, it should be easy to do him, the kindly robber baron, and how nearly impossible it was to do Papa. Grandpapa had never told me the measle story. He was safely pinned, a specimen, in the past. There was the Zorn portrait in the director's room at the bank. The Duran over the fireplace in the hall. Line by line I could do the immobile, carefully painted face, and there were actual records of his financial manipulations. Grandpapa, Mr. Frederick Harrison Scott, so identified in a group containing Sir Ernest Cassel and the Prince of Wales taken at a shooting party in front of Blenheim. Grandpapa in progress over Europe with his beautiful second wife and six or seven of his ten sons, tutors, valets, maids, taking whole floors of hotels, incredibly uxorious, domestic —yet dying blind, syphilitic, before I was born, amid the ascertainable splendours of the house in the country. Grandpapa—yes even that I could do—in this tub, the worm tender-heavy with anticipation, the walk through the cave of mirrors, the begetting of Tom, who was only fourteen when I was born, in the caned and carved bed.

GRANDPAPA was easy, but it was Papa I knew I wanted to know. I smiled ruefully at the realisation that it was his brother's, not Papa's begetting I had instinctively chosen. How simple life was for Tom Jones! Only the *person* of his father mattered. Yes I—we—were greedier now and what good did it do us? The obelisk was really stone, not flesh erect. Reflections did not linger in quick-silvered glass. The stare they returned was only the moment's gaze. Neither the brittle-blown nor the damasked poppies ever medicined a moment's pain, ever numbed a crowded mind to releasing sleep.

Papa—could it possibly make any difference whether he was begotten in prolonged love on the daised bed amid every splendid, carnal beauty or snatched quickly from time by a mechanical spasm in a *wagon-lit* of the Orient Express hurtling through the European night? I knew enough about my own life to know that the same woman is used—loved—at different times in different ways. Place, time, the events of the day, the sudden vision of the unpredictable blood were all part of the unfactorable equation, riddled by circumstance, explosive circumstance. The order of the universe? How was it difficult to impute this conception to accident? How believe in a divine concatenation of stars when the circumstance of your existence depended on so many variables? Had Papa delayed a psychic moment in the delivery of my seed, I might have been a girl: I might have been red, not black. Had Grandpapa swayed one more, one fewer time, on the careening Blue Train, Papa would not have been Papa. A gulp of water, one more turn of the leaden cap on the squeezed toothpaste and the history of the world is forever changed. Papa, the Emperor of the Universe, unique in diamonds on the pearwood bed, would never have been.

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Richard Lowenthal

Has the Revolution a Future? (II)

WE MAY ASSUME that the Soviet decision to take measures against the Chinese faction even at the risk of an open break dates from the clash at the 22nd congress (1961)—just like the Chinese decision to prepare actively for the split. The diplomatic rupture with Albania and the quiet expulsion of the leaders of the "anti-party-group"—Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich—showed a new realisation of the urgent need to deprive Mao's factional allies of any influence in the European Soviet Bloc. (In both cases there were also hesitations and inconsistencies indicating a sense of the political risks involved and, perhaps, a disagreement about tactics within the Soviet leadership.) With the issuing of a number of documents and reports on the dispute by the French, Italian, and Belgian Communists in early 1962, a more active campaign was also set in motion among pro-Soviet Communist parties outside the Bloc. Finally, the resolve of the Soviet leaders to make no further concessions for the sake of compromise became visible in the open-voting down of a Chinese-sponsored resolution at the Stockholm session of the World Peace Council (December 1961), and in the refusal to entertain the Chinese-supported "neutral" proposals of the following spring for an early Communist world conference unless all participants would pledge themselves to abide by majority decisions.

Nevertheless the Soviets, throughout most of 1962, were not attacking their principal opponents by name in their own press: like the Chinese, they were manoeuvring to avoid responsibility for the break even while accepting its inevitability. Only after the public Chinese attacks on their own conduct of the Cuban missile crisis in the autumn of that year did the Soviets encourage explicit criticism of the Chinese at the congresses of European Communist parties and join in it. And only after the Chinese had (in the summer of 1963) come out with their root-and-branch condemnation of Soviet domestic policy and of the CPSU programme—and had at the same time weakened their own propagandist appeal by opposing the ban on nuclear tests—did the Soviets conclude that it was now in their interest to complete the formal and final split, and therefore to call a world conference.

The Soviet decisions first to risk, then to promote, and finally to hasten the split thus took place in interaction with two other major developments in Soviet policy: ( ) the climax and final failure of Khrushchev's attempt at a world political breakthrough, followed by the turn to a new effort at Russo-American *détente*; and (*2*) the growing preoccupation of the Soviet leaders with the need to improve the performance of the Soviet and East European economies (including their performance in the satisfaction of consumers' wants). The Soviet leaders' concept of the form that relations among the "loyal" Communist parties should take after the break with the Chinese has been shaped by this new situation, and by the somewhat contradictory needs arising from it: by the growing awareness of their irrecoverable loss of authority, and by the difficulty of rallying parties for an International that was no longer all-inclusive.

Toward a "Letter-box" International?

ON THE WHOLE, both the collapse of Khrushchev's world-wide offensive and the bitterness of the conflict with Peking seem to have inclined the Soviet leaders to make their links with other Communist parties less rigid than at any time since 1920—to seek a loose and broad fraternal alliance rather than unity on a strict and narrow doctrinal basis. After the Cuban crisis, a decisive advance of the "world revolution" appears far more distant than Khrushchev believed in the preceding years. After the schism, the relevance to Soviet greatness of further Communist revolutions, even where they are possible, appears far more doubtful than before. Now that experience has shown that the Soviet Union may not be able to control the policy of other revolutionary powers, the Soviet leaders must be increasingly concerned that other powers should not attempt to control their own by forcing on them ideological arguments in an international framework. That means that they must now favour a form of international

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association founded on broadly defined common objectives and mutual ideological non-aggression rather than on the search for precise doctrinal unity. Finally, *the greater the toleration* for differences of opinion in such an alliance, *the broader the support* the Soviets may hope to rally for it in the face of Chinese obstruction.

By its very nature, such a broad fraternal alliance would exclude any return to a formal claim for Soviet leadership based on doctrinal authority, let alone organisational discipline. In some ways, it would be little more than what Lenin contemptuously called the Second International—"a letter-box." Yet as it would, in fact, be grouped around the Soviet Union, it would still be a channel through which the latter, thanks to the prestige of its military and economic power, could exert considerable influence on important movements in many countries. It would also enable the Soviet leaders to tell their own people that though Moscow has ceased to be the headquarters of an embattled army of the world revolution, their country is still the beloved and admired stronghold of the great majority of the world's progressive forces. Such an arrangement would therefore be in harmony with an internal situation in which the Soviet leaders, while trying to legitimate their rule increasingly by their domestic economic achievement, still feel the need for an international legitimation as well.

This is, of course, a "revisionist" concept of what the links between a Communist power and the international movement ought to be like. It corresponds closely to what the Yugoslavs (with growing support from the Italian Communists) have advocated in recent years. In fact, the first indications that the Soviets were moving towards that sort of concept were furnished by their demonstrative *rapprochement* with Tito's régime since 1962 and by their defence of it against Chinese attacks on the grounds that fraternal solidarity was possible without complete ideological agreement. Since then, the Soviets have further developed this argument by insisting that Yugoslavia, despite some "errors" was still a "socialist" country and that the same applied to Albania on the opposite pole: thus they made clear their own willingness to remain in a common international association with both "revisionist" and "dogmatist" parties and governments, provided only that all would refrain from hostile polemics against the Soviet Union. Finally, since late in 1963, Soviet writers have begun to underpin the tactical efforts for closer relations with some of the ruling parties of ex-colonial countries by admitting the possibility—also first put forward by the Yugoslav revisionists—that some of these countries, having embarked on the "non-capitalist road of development" thanks to the sincere anti-imperialist and pro-socialist orientation of their ruling parties, might actually advance toward "socialism" without the leadership (or even the legal existence!) of a Communist party. Their views were given solemn official sanction when Ben Bella was hailed as the head of a party government engaged in building socialism during his visit to the Soviet Union in the spring of 1964.

This suggests that the Soviets may seriously hope to get some of these ruling left-wing nationalist parties—parties that have never accepted a commitment to "Marxism-Leninism" but feel that they share their anti-imperialist and "socialist" outlook with the Communists—to join a reconstructed International, particularly if the entry of Yugoslavia proved that this could be done without joining a Soviet-commanded military bloc at the same time. The calculation is that what would be lost in ideological conformity would thus be more than regained in breadth of influence. This may also help to explain the comparative readiness of the Soviets, in the discussions and correspondence with other Communist parties concerning the preparation of a new world conference, to accept the demand for pledges that this should *not* be a conference of "excommunication," and that no attempt should be made to establish a supra-national discipline, or to impose a new dogma that would interfere with the autonomy and equality of the attending parties. Yet for the first two years of this period of preparation, this tendency of the Soviet leaders to put their international party relations on a looser but broader basis had to contend with the simultaneous Soviet desire to tighten the ties of control in the region where inter-party relations matter most—the area of the Soviet Bloc proper in Eastern Europe.

"*De-Satellitisation*" *in Eastern Europe*

Both the Sino-Soviet conflict and the growing Soviet emphasis on economic performance have contributed to this counter-trend. The need to eliminate pro-Chinese factions in the Soviets' own sphere has led to demands that all the East European states should follow the Soviet rupture with Albania, to fairly open pressure for the removal of Chervenkov and his

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followers at the time of the Bulgarian party congress in late 1962, and to more discreet urgings to make de-Stalinisation belatedly effective in Czechoslovakia. At the same time, the Soviet leaders reacted to the—for them—surprising success of the West European Common Market by pressing for speedier progress toward a rational "socialist division of labour" within the *Comecon*. By 1962, Khrushchev had come to realise that the complete independence of the national planning machineries of the member states was in fact favouring *autarchic nationalist tendencies* to the detriment of the Bloc. Thus, when (at a meeting held in Moscow in June 1962) he called for the creation of a new Executive Committee of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid, consisting of party leaders, as well as for the forming of a number of supra-national economic organs, he was not simply looking for the best institutional forms for Bloc-wide rationalisation—he was seeking to enlist the loyalty of the party leaders in the struggle to overcome the vested interests of the national planning bureaucracies. As soon as one of these leaders, the Rumanian Gheorghiu-Dej, refused to co-operate in sacrificing his country's heavy industrial projects to a Soviet-sponsored supra-national plan, the Soviets found that in this region at least, they were still in need of their traditional "leading role." But they also found, much to their surprise, that the decay of their authority had gone so far that *they could no longer enforce it*—even on a recalcitrant "satellite"—by any means short of physical power. This they were now unwilling to use.

The surprise of the Soviets was not unnatural. They had accepted the fact that they could not control sovereign Communist states that had arisen from independent revolutions: that had been proved not only by the conflict with China, but by Yugoslavia's defiance of Stalin and Albania's challenge to Khrushchev. But they had never regarded the East European Communist régimes that owed their existence to Soviet military domination of that region as sovereign states. It was, after all, the obvious fact that these régimes depended on Soviet external protection for maintaining their domestic rule that had earned them the Western label of "satellites." When after Stalin's death Khrushchev had introduced a number of reforms in this empire, ending its brutal exploitation, reducing detailed Soviet supervision, and even granting the local Communist leaders some representation in collective organs of military and economic co-ordination, he had meant to modernise the form, but not to abandon the substance of Soviet control. He still stuck to this concept when he restored the unity of the Bloc after the October revolts of 1956.

In fact, of course, those events had shown the first serious weakening of Soviet control in this area, caused by the crisis of Soviet authority that followed de-Stalinisation. The Polish Communists' change of leadership amounted to a first step of emancipation from satellite status. Yet the Hungarian uprising proved once again to all the East European Communist régimes that *their very survival would be in danger* without Soviet protection. On the basis of these experiences, the 1957 reconstruction of the Bloc granted the satellites greater domestic autonomy than Khrushchev had originally intended, but at the price of strict subordination to Soviet foreign policy and ideological authority. At the same time, the Soviets had begun to work for a more differentiated division of labour not only for economic reasons, but also as a means to strengthen the ties of self-interest that would bind each member state to the Bloc.

THIS SETTLEMENT worked well enough at first. During the next five years, nothing dramatic happened in Eastern Europe (if we leave the Albanian issue aside). Yet it would appear in retrospect that it was just this period of quiet consolidation that prepared the ground for the "de-satellitisation" of Eastern Europe. As most of the Communist rulers used their autonomy to make life more tolerable for their subjects, while the Hungarian experience caused a general loss of hope for an overthrow of Communist rule, the growing resignation of the peoples led to a loss of fear and a growing self-assurance among the Communist leaders that reduced their sense of dependence on Soviet protection. Conversely, as some of those leaders got bolder in standing up to the Soviets on behalf of national interests, they came to be accepted by growing sections of their own people, with however many reservations, as national spokesmen, and their need to hold down their subjects by force was correspondingly lessened.

The pace of the process and the mixture of its ingredients have, of course, differed from country to country, according to the history of each régime, its assets for trade relations outside the Bloc, and the degree of its continuing sense of danger from the West. In Hungary, the shock of 1956 has made the leaders probably more

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inclined to make concessions to their people but less inclined to quarrel with the Soviets than any of their neighbours. In Poland, fear of German "revanchism" has contributed both to close co-operation with the Soviets and to a renewed "hardening" of the régime. Economic dependence on the Bloc is a formidable tie for Bulgaria, while Rumania's resources give her possibilities for extra-Bloc trade that combine with the total absence of threats from the West to encourage her independence. But nowhere has the simple satellite relationship to the Soviets survived—with the one exception of Eastern Germany. There, the magnetism of a free and prosperous state comprising three-quarters of the German people makes impossible any national identification of the forcibly separated fourth quarter with its Soviet-imposed rulers.

The Soviet Bloc in Eastern Europe thus had already moved a considerable distance away from the old type of subordination to Soviet leadership in the direction of *a classical alliance*, centred around the military and economic preponderance of a leading power but limited by various national interests, when the open Chinese challenge to Soviet authority and the threat of a split accelerated the change and forced it into the consciousness of the participants. Outside Albania, none of the East European régimes showed an inclination to side with China on the issues in dispute (the wistful hankerings of some bureaucratic cliques for the Stalinist past notwithstanding). But nearly all of them felt that if they decided to reject the Chinese views, this was their own free decision made in the light of their own experience and interests, not the result of an automatic loyalty to the Soviet authority, and that it was also their own affair when and how they wished to give expression to this decision. Hence there has been considerable differentiation both in the handling of state relations with Albania and in the form and timing of public polemics with China by the East European Communists. There has been considerable reluctance to endorse the Soviet call for another world conference without an assurance of Chinese participation. The East European Communist leaders realised that Sino-Soviet rivalry *within* a factionally divided movement gave them increased freedom of manoeuvre in relation to the Soviets. They were unwilling to sanction a formal and final split so long as there was danger that this might lead to a revival of Soviet claims for doctrinal authority—at least for their own area.

THE ISSUE was brought to a test by the Rumanian resistance to Soviet plans for Bloc-wide economic integration. The Rumanian objections to these plans, due to Rumania's special economic interests as an industrially underdeveloped country whose chances for independent industrialisation were favoured by highly saleable raw material resources, were not shared by the other East European states. In fact, the plans in question were largely based on Polish proposals. But the Rumanians raised the question of *principle* whether a sovereign Communist government could be forced to submit to supra-national planning against its will; and the Chinese by publicly supporting their stand for the economic sovereignty of any "socialist" state made it impossible for the Soviets to use physical pressure against them as this might have driven many wavering parties to the Chinese side. The Soviets' loss of their former uncontested authority, skilfully exploited by the Rumanians in their "objective" presentation of both the Soviet and Chinese points of view and their attempts at "mediation," thus hampered Khrushchev even in using the weight of Russian economic and military power against a rebellious ex-satellite; and when Khrushchev tried to achieve a change of leadership in the Rumanian party during a "private" visit, he failed utterly. It was after this that the Rumanian Central Committee (in its resolution of April 1964) while siding with the Soviets on the main issues of the conflict with China, haughtily criticised the conduct of both sides and also took the occasion to erect the rejection of any form of supra-national planning into an "ideological principle." The resolution was followed up with a campaign of information meetings for party cadres with strong anti-Soviet and anti-Khrushchev undertones, and with the demonstrative dispatch of high-level delegations to Washington and Paris. When the Soviets decided after brief hesitation to swallow their pride, stop all polemics with the Rumanians, and in fact drop the idea of majority decisions on supra-national planning, this meant that their hope for restoring a more tightly-knit control in Eastern Europe had been abandoned. The Rumanians, by using Khrushchev's need to compete with Mao, had not only won their own battle for economic independence, but had ensured that in any Soviet plans for future international cooperation the "broad and loose" concept would prevail—without exceptions for Eastern Europe.

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Communism in Eastern Europe is, thus, likely to survive the schism with a structure that is no longer based on either totalitarian doctrinal unity or one-way imperial control, but on an alliance of differentiated and independent but broadly "like-minded" states accepting a limited measure of leadership from the hegemonial power. Within this region, the growth of pluralism and its reluctant acceptance by the Soviet Union will prove compatible with the preservation of unity to the extent that the ruling parties share common interests. But whenever the constellation of interests should change—*viz.*, by the growth of new chances of extra-Bloc trade following internal economic reforms in some of those states, or by the disappearance of some of the fears underlying the alliance—such a structure would have little reserves against further centrifugal tendencies. Moreover, the lack of a universally recognised "model" will leave the impulse for further internal revolutionary transformation—the characteristic dynamism of totalitarian régimes—seriously weakened in all of them. It will strengthen the receptivity for "revisionist" economic reforms aimed at improved performance in most of them—particularly if such reforms should first be adopted by the Soviet Union.

The Growth of Soviet "Revisionism"

I HAVE BEEN arguing that the increasing preoccupation of the Soviet leaders with economic improvement rather than "permanent revolution" at home has made it easier for them to accept the facts of Communist pluralism abroad and to seek a looser form of association with the international revolutionary struggle. It is equally true, I think, that the irretrievable loss of the Soviet Communists' "leading role" in a single, world-wide movement, and the fading of the grandiose visions of a speedy, world-wide revolutionary advance under Soviet leadership, have favoured the tendency to shift the ruling party's primary legitimation to its role as the architect of domestic economic progress.

The first major step in that direction was taken within a few weeks of the Cuban missile crisis that ended Khrushchev's hopes of a speedy overturn of the world balance of power, and while Chinese taunts about a "Munich" were still reverberating in his ears. At a plenary session of the Central Committee in November 1962, Khrushchev took a recently re-discovered draft of Lenin's (dealing with the primacy of economic tasks after the seizure of power) as his text, or rather his pretext, in order to justify a sudden and radical reorganisation of the entire party machine into parallel industrial and agricultural sectors: henceforth, the primary duty of the heads of party organisations on all levels was to consist in raising output in their area of responsibility. Technically, the plan was an improvisaton of doubtful value; politically, it hurt many vested interests; and ideologically, it had a distinctly revisionist flavour, tending as it did to turn the party's main attention away from the needs of ideological struggle at home and abroad. It was thus hardly surprising that the winter of 1962-63 brought more resistance to Khrushchev's new "line" in high places than had been noticeable at any time since his 1957 victory over the "anti-party group"—resistance carried on in the name of the primacy of politics over economics and of the importance of tightening the party's control on the ideological front. Yet Khrushchev rode out the storm, and after the Chinese attack on the party programme was able to go ahead with his policy. By the time of the Central Committee meeting of February 1964, it was Suslov, the party's leading doctrinaire, who declared that the *international* duty of the Communists of the "socialist countries" consisted in building up the new society at home so that it should become an attractive example for the masses elsewhere.

Suslov put forward that discovery in his report on the conflict with the Chinese Communist leaders. It was part of his rebuttal of their attempts to proclaim the underdeveloped continents as the new "storm centre of the world revolution" and to deny to the conflict between the advanced countries of the "Socialist camp," above all the Soviet Union, and the imperialists, its role as the "main contradiction" of the present epoch. Yet in order to defend his thesis of the central role of this conflict despite the inglorious end of Khrushchev's offensive—and despite the evident absence of revolutionary chances in the advanced Western countries—Suslov had to reinterpret the conflict as being fought out mainly in terms of economic competition. This interpretation had, of course, been used often before in propagandist speeches and interviews addressed to Western audiences; but never had it been given the dignity of a serious doctrinal statement before the leading organ of the party. With that, it became indeed a commitment to a new international "*economism*" that is as far removed from Lenin's concept of the "world revolution" as is the Chinese

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vision of a revolutionary front centred on the underdeveloped nations. Thus, under the pressure of the need to systematise the doctrinal justifications for the divergent development of the two powers, the disintegration of Leninism proceeds in both directions: to China's final rejection of its Marxist elements—the link between the revolution and the industrial working class of the advanced countries—corresponds a Soviet emphasis on the importance of "economic superiority" for the victory of socialism that often sounds like an echo of the Marxist arguments once used against Lenin by his Menshevik critics.

AT THE SAME TIME, the Soviets' growing concentration on economic results—and results of a kind that are to benefit the consumer—creates a materialist spirit that is bound to weaken the pressure for tight ideological control of all spheres of life. It strengthens the argument for reforms that are in conflict with received dogma but in accord with "practical experience." Before the November plenum of 1962, the Libermann proposals for reducing detailed bureaucratic planning and giving industrial managers freedom and incentive to reduce costs and improve quality in response to market indicators had been eagerly discussed; an experiment was authorised even then. During the months of the counter-attack of the doctrinaires, nothing more was heard of the matter. Yet by 1964 the counter-attack had petered out, and the Libermann discussion was resumed with increased boldness and evident official support; practical measures in this direction have even been speeded up since Khrushchev's fall. The trend is clearly in the direction of a "Titoist" type of market-economy in a planned framework—though the changeover must be infinitely more difficult in Russia after decades of detailed bureaucratic planning on a gigantic scale.

With all due allowances for the differences in scale and power, it may thus be predicted that a Soviet Union whose international ties have been loosened by the schism and the growth of pluralistic Communism, and whose ruling party is increasingly thrown back on the need for justifying its rule by achievements of value to its own people, will evolve in the same revisionist direction in which the Yugoslav Communists evolved when Stalin had cut them off from the world Communist movement and when their survival depended on broadening their domestic support. This evolution still takes place under the imperative of the self-preservation of the party régime. Indeed, the overthrow of Khrushchev and the subsequent cancellation of the 1962 reorganisation of the party can only be understood as an attempt to ensure its survival. But self-preservation now requires that this régime should change both in its justification and in its methods. The totalitarian régime, once characterised by permanent revolution carried out by mass terrorism and guided by ideological goals, is being eroded into an evolutionary authoritarianism in which the party still wields a monopoly of political power, but is reluctantly yielding sectors of economic and intellectual life to autonomous social activity. As the hegemonial power of the Soviet Union in the East European Bloc has survived the doctrinaire authority of the Soviet Communists over the former satellite parties, so the institutional power of the Soviet party at home survives the erosion of its ideology. Yet in the long run, it is not very plausible that the monopolistic power of an ideological party should be required for so unideological a purpose as the promotion of peaceful economic progress. Hence its preservation may become more difficult in each new crisis of succession. The Chinese may well be right in wondering how long a theocracy can hold on to power after the disintegration of its faith.

Will Communism Survive in the West?

THE CHANGES in the international outlook of the Soviet leaders I am describing could be summed up in the thesis that Khrushchev's attempt at a revival of the Leninist faith in "world revolution" has collapsed under the impact of his dual failure to achieve a breakthrough in world politics or to maintain the unity of world communism, and that the Soviet Union is returning to a concentration on "Communism in one bloc" recalling Stalin's "Socialism in one country." But just as Stalin's scepticism concerning the progress of world revolution did not prevent him from using the foreign Communist parties as instruments of his policy, so the present and future Soviet leaders will wish to use the largest possible number of international party links as channels for Soviet influence —so long as the Soviet Union itself is governed by a party régime. In the circumstances, the Soviet leaders themselves cannot expect to compete successfully with the Chinese for the allegiance of totalitarian revolutionary parties involved in a serious bid for power in the under-

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developed areas of the world. But they start with the support of the overwhelming majority of the Communists in the advanced countries of the West; and they clearly wish to maintain or develop alliances with the largest possible number of already *ruling* revolutionary parties in the underdeveloped countries—whether these be nominally Communist as in Cuba or nominally non-Communist as in Algeria.

Yet it is just the Communist parties in the advanced Western countries that find themselves most seriously adrift owing to the decay of Soviet authority and the disintegration of the Leninist faith. For decades, these parties have stubbornly clung to a totalitarian revolutionary doctrine and corresponding forms of organisation in a situation offering no revolutionary chances, keeping their faith alive by hitching it to a foreign model. How are they to survive the admission that neither the doctrine nor the model have universal validity?

Faced with this threat to their ideological foundations, many of the small Communist parties in the West have at first reacted by trying to ignore the schism, pretending as long as possible that there was still a single Communist world movement under Soviet leadership—and then by pleading with the protagonists to restore unity at any price and not to force them to make a choice. But these are short-term evasions, likely to be followed by a further sectarian splintering of the Communist splinter parties and by their progressive disappearance from the arena of effective political activity.

IT IS DIFFERENT, of course, with the Communist mass parties of France and Italy. They do not work in conditions of a pre-revolutionary crisis either, at any rate not since the end of the post-war upheavals. (And even during that critical period the task assigned them by Stalin was not to attempt the revolutionary seizure of power, but to influence national policy and entrench themselves in the state machine by joining in "coalitions of liberation.") But they benefit from the fact that important sections in both nations, including the majority of their industrial working class, are traditionally disaffected—not in the sense of being ready for revolutionary action, but of refusing to feel themselves as part of the democratic state. This mass attitude, which has its roots in past history rather than in present economic and social conditions, was revived when the Communists (and, in Italy, also the Nenni Socialists) were pushed back into opposition in 1947. The Communist parties have been skilful in exploiting it, satisfying at the same time the ideological needs of those disaffected masses by their revolutionary phraseology, and their practical needs (particularly in Italy), by a militant reformist policy in the trade unions, co-operatives, and municipalities. (This recalls the similar dual role of the "revolutionary" Social Democrats of Germany until 1914, of Italy until the victory of Fascism, and of Austria until the Dollfuss coup of 1934.) But just because this kind of pseudo-revolutionary mass disaffection is an historical hangover rather than a reflection of present conditions in the Western world, both parties have largely depended on the Soviet myth for maintaining it.

Yet the inner atmosphere of both parties and the view taken by their leaders of their own role have been as different as their history. The French CP had emerged from Stalin's continuous purges with a thoroughly Stalinist and thoroughly mediocre leadership, apt only to maintain its members' hatred of the "bourgeois state" and their loyalty to the Soviet Union with unswerving conviction, and to combine the comfortable role of an entrenched permanent opposition with the smug certainty that they were thereby rendering an important service to the "socialist fatherland." The Italian CP, whose old cadres had been shielded from some of Stalin's excesses by their underground existence and by the late Palmiro Togliatti's tactical skill, and whose younger elements had been newly recruited since liberation, had never become equally fossilised and its able leaders were both too ambitious and too conscious of the contribution made to the rise of Fascism by the purely negative opposition of the "maximalist" Socialists to feel happy in a similar policy. Much more than their French colleagues, they had seen their early government participation as a possible road to the "legal" conquest of power; much more, too, they chafed under the domestic isolation to which the Cold War and Italy's NATO membership condemned an avowedly pro-Soviet party.

THIS DIFFERENCE OF BACKGROUND made it inevitable that the two parties should react very differently to the series of shocks beginning with de-Stalinisation and leading up to the present disintegration of world Communism. To the French leaders, any weakening of Soviet authority is a net loss, because their vested interest in the Soviet myth is overwhelming. They reluctantly accepted de-Stalinisation because

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they would not oppose the incumbent Soviet leaders, but they dwelt as little as possible on the critique of the past. They accepted Khrushchev's doctrine of the "peaceful" or "parliamentary" road to power; but though the Soviet leader had obviously proclaimed it at least partly in order to make his French and Italian comrades once again eligible for government participation, the PCF made no serious efforts to overcome the barriers maintaining its domestic isolation. They rejected Togliatti's suggestion of a "polycentric" future for Communism and insisted on Soviet leadership. They praised Soviet intervention against the Hungarian "counter-revolution." They willingly endorsed the second excommunication of the Yugoslavs. Finally, when the conflict with the Chinese developed, they again "followed the baton" and took the Soviet side all the way, and while they no doubt deplore the split, they became the first major party unconditionally to support the Soviet proposal for a new world conference.

The Italian Communists, on the other hand, while sensitive to the blow inflicted by de-Stalinisation on the Soviet myth, have from the start also grasped the chance of greater "polycentric" autonomy implied in the weakening of Soviet authority. They welcomed it all the more eagerly because they hoped that visible proof of their independence would remove the principal obstacle to winning a share of power along the "peaceful road." If they did not succeed, it was not due to lack of domestic flexibility—only to the fact that they proved not to be independent enough to disavow the Soviet intervention in Hungary. They did indeed adopt the Yugoslav version, defending the final Red Army intervention without claiming that the Budapest uprising had been "counter-revolutionary" from the start. But this nuance did not even convince Pietro Nenni and his Socialist party. In fact, the shock of Hungary, following so closely on the shock of de-Stalinisation, was probably decisive for Nenni's evolution towards an autonomous, democratic policy, culminating in his joining a government coalition without the Communists.

Yet it seems in retrospect that ever since then, the leaders of the PCI have been waiting for their chance to become *really* independent. They did not break relations with the Yugoslav "revisionists" after their second excommunication in 1958. They objected behind the scenes to the concessions made to the Chinese at the Moscow world conference of 1960. They were ahead of the Soviets in recognising the success of the West European Common Market, which their trade union leaders experienced in its favourable effect on Italian wages, and in calling for a realistic (*i.e.*, reformist) adjustment to it. They developed the doctrine of the "parliamentary road" to the point of specifically promising that not only "other parties," but "opposition parties" could continue to function after a hypothetical Communist victory. Without actually quarrelling with the Soviets, they went consistently ahead of them in promoting "revisionist" ideas inside the fold, and were rewarded in becoming the main target of open Chinese attacks after the Yugoslav "outsiders" and before the Soviets were attacked by name.

Since the end of serious attempts at a Sino-Soviet compromise, the Italian Communists clearly consider that the hour of real independence has come—and this, to them, means the hour when the Soviets can frankly be treated as a respected but no longer infallible ally. During the municipal elections of the spring of 1963, the Italian Communists openly criticised the then current Soviet campaign to restore ideological discipline among writers and artists. More important, when the Soviets began to call for a new world conference, the Italians (in open agreement with the Yugoslavs and in confidential consultation with the Poles) expressed misgivings about its usefulness and finally agreed to participate only on conditions: there should be no formal excommunication of the Chinese; there should be no attempt to impose a general line on the parties attending, but a frank discussion and toleration of differences; and the conference should be devoted to a "constructive examination" of recent international developments rather than to a factional settling of accounts. The Italians have thus been an important factor in pushing the Soviets towards the "letter-box" type of International, and by their posthumous publication of Togliatti's last memorandum to Khrushchev they have served notice that they intend to remain an important factor in filling this revisionist form with equally revisionist content.

THE ITALIAN EXAMPLE seems to illustrate two of the conditions which any Communist party will have to fulfil if it is to survive as an important force in the West. (*1*) It will have to accept the disappearance of Soviet doctrinaire authority, and to convince both its followers and its opponents that its support of

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Soviet policies is not unconditional—that its traditional Soviet sympathies no longer imply subordination. And (*2*) it will have to adapt its programme and policy to the political, economic, and social situation in the advanced Western democracies, and to convince its potential partners that its programme is meant to be carried out in the institutional framework of Western democracy under the rule of law. In short, it will have to be independent, and it will have to be thoroughly revisionist. In the second half of the 'sixties, to be unconditionally pro-Soviet and to wait for Moscow's doctrinal pronouncements is no longer enough for a great party—not even in France.

Yet it is doubtful whether even the fulfilment of these two conditions will suffice to assure an effective role for Communist parties in the West—so long as by "Communist parties" we mean parties with the centralistic, undemocratic internal structure originally imposed by the Comintern on all its sections. Next to their dependence on a foreign centre and to their refusal to be bound by constitutional rules, this totalitarian form of organisation has always been a basic objection to the acceptance of the Communists as possible partners by other political forces, and hence an obstacle to their full participation in the democratic political game. Yet it is such participation that they must crave if they no longer look for salvation from beyond the frontiers. On the other hand, the centralistic form of organisation was originally justified by the need to forge an instrument for the revolutionary conquest of power, and to ensure disciplined obedience to the world headquarters in Moscow: if the political reasons are really gone, why not the organisational corollary? Already the question is beginning to be asked not only from outside, but from inside the parties concerned. Among the Italian Communists, the avowedly revisionist group around Amendola and Alicata has advocated the principle of "majority and minority platforms" ever since the 22nd Congress of the CPSU; and to advocate such a principle for more than two years without being silenced by organisational measures goes quite a distance towards achieving it in practice. Even the French Communists have lately had to tolerate, for the first time in many years, a kind of opposition from their students' organisation, whose leaders are frankly looking to the "revisionists" in Rome.

Of course, we must expect resistance against organisational change to be tougher than on any other issue. Here, not only the vested interests of the party machines are at stake, but ultimately the distinctive character of the Communist parties itself—their "being" as distinct from their "consciousness." If they renounced that, they would turn into some kind of militant democratic-socialist parties, and might well find that their only remaining reasons for separate existence are of a historical, not to say sentimental, kind. Yet the open question is precisely whether parties with the distinctive Eastern characteristics once transferred to Western Europe by the Bolsheviks will be able, in a non-revolutionary situation and in the long run, to survive the fading of the belief in the unique salvational mission of the Soviet Union.

Soviet Communism & the Third World

WHAT OF the prospects for Soviet influence on the Communist or left-wing nationalist one-party régimes of ex-colonial countries, and for their further political evolution under that influence?

At the moment, it seems improbable that the ruling parties of either Cuba or Algeria, Mali, Guinea, etc., would be ready to join a Soviet-sponsored International. They all wish to be formally neutral as between the Soviets and the Chinese, and some of them also between the Soviets and the West. Whether these objections will retain their force depends on many unforeseeable factors—on China's economic successes or failures and the degree of her involvement in warlike conflicts in the first case, on Western development aid and the degree of its detachment from private vested interests in the second.

Still, formal participation in international conferences, or even in a new kind of international association, is not the only form in which influence may be exercised by means of "inter-party relations." In some cases, such relations may be very effective without being exclusive or even formalised. Kemal Ataturk's "Republican People's Party" never dreamt of affiliating with the Comintern, and the episode of the Kuomintang's admission to it as a "sympathising party" came near the end of its real co-operation with the Communists; yet for a time, an important formative influence was exercised by the Bolshevik model in both cases. For years, the Yugoslavs have maintained informal party relations both with the Russians and with some of the new ruling parties in Africa (especially the Algerian FLN). The Soviets receive from time to time "fraternal delegations"

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from Ghana, Guinea, and Mali, but the Chinese may do the same. Castro will certainly maintain party relations with both Moscow and Peking as long as possible. In short, pluralistic Communism means not only the decay of the old International and the extremely difficult efforts to form two rival new Internationals of very different types; it will also mean a profusion of bilateral and multilateral criss-cross contacts, not all of them visible to the naked eye.

In fact, just in the case of the new ruling parties of ex-colonial countries, we have to bear one more type of relationship in mind—what may be called "licensed infiltration" or "the party within the party." The Communists in Cuba who merged their organisation with that of the victorious Fidel Castro were regarded as poor revolutionaries, but they quickly gained influence by having a rather more precise programme than their new companions; and some of their leaders probably still feel a basic loyalty to Moscow. The Algerian Communist Party was banned when the FLN introduced a single-party system, but its newspaper, with unchanged editors, now appears as an organ of the FLN, and Communists boast of having substantially influenced the FLN's new programme when they attended the drafting convention as representatives of affiliated "mass organisations." Soviet specialists on these countries now state in their theoretical articles that a non-Communist one-party régime need not be "reactionary"—provided its internal structure permits the "conscious proletarian elements" to exert a growing influence on its policy. Indeed, a recent joint statement of the Arab Communist parties foreshadowed similar Communist participation in Nasser's "Arab Socialist Union."

ONCE AGAIN, we are reminded of the Kuomintang in the early 'twenties, when Soviet aid and advice was combined with the "bloc within" tactics of the Chinese Communists. But the present experiment takes place *after* the victory of the national revolution, and its purpose may be different. It seems at least doubtful whether Moscow looks on the Communists in these countries as future leaders of an independent mass movement and aspirants to power in their own name—or whether it does not simply regard the exertion of influence on the ruling groups by this channel as a preferable alternative to the development of rival parties in conflict with them. Nor should it be taken for granted that the ambitions of the Communist cadres in these countries are more far-reaching. Their training has given them a sense of superior "scientific" insight that is valuable in their present role, but they might find it very difficult to fight the nationalist-socialist myth of the established leaders with a myth of their own. Indeed, the weakening of Soviet authority will be a far less serious handicap for such backroom advisers than for would-be political leaders: the latter could no longer point to Russia as the unique model of true socialism —but the former may still point to it as an impressive model of economic development.

In the era of pluralistic Communism, the prospects for Soviet influence on the post-revolutionary régimes of underdeveloped countries may thus be improved precisely to the extent that the Soviets may be less committed to replace them ultimately by Communist party régimes—that they come to adopt the attitude of the Yugoslav revisionists towards these countries. In what direction, then, may we expect that influence to be exercised?

Internally, it will favour the "non-capitalist road"—the expropriation of foreign firms, the building up of the nationalised sector, radical land reforms. But the Soviets may be cautious about either insisting on agricultural collectivisation or on their own type of detailed administrative planning. Internationally, it will use the slogans of anti-imperialist solidarity but also those of peace and disarmament. It will aim at winning the diplomatic support of these countries, in the United Nations and elsewhere, but will be cautious about pushing them into armed conflicts with the West which they could not sustain alone and in which the Soviets would not wish to be involved. Generally, it will try step by step to replace Western political, economic, and cultural influence in these countries, while respecting their military neutrality and ideological peculiarities. To most of the countries concerned, this policy of a "Cold War with muffled drums" may prove more attractive than the more militant policy of the Chinese.

Some Conclusions

LET ME TRY to sum up the results of this analysis.

1. The first and most definite conclusion that seems to emerge is the answer to the initial question. The Sino-Soviet schism is *not* a mere phenomenon of power conflicts within a basically unchanged Communist world. It does both reflect and promote divergent trends of development in the Soviet Union and China, leading

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to essential changes of policy and doctrine on both sides. Hence there will also be less and less of an unambiguous meaning to the concept of a "Communist" party or régime. Even to-day, it is no longer possible to define them by Leninist doctrine, for Leninist orthodoxy, polemically claimed by either side, has in fact been abandoned by both of them. Neither the Chinese attempt to transfer the revolutionary mission of the industrial proletariat to what Arnold Toynbee has called the "external proletariat" of Western civilisation, nor the Soviet thesis that socialism will ultimately defeat imperialism by economic competition can in truth be described as Leninist.

2. My second conclusion concerns the new international alignment resulting from the schism. The trend is not towards a simple split into two clear-cut and stable new Internationals. The Chinese will indeed try to form a new International of actively revolutionary parties based on their own model and doctrinal authority, and may have substantial initial success in countries whose internal situation offers chances for new totalitarian revolutions. But such an International is likely to be unstable owing to the strength of nationalist motives in each participating movement and to the limited attraction of the Chinese model of economic development. The Soviets are aware that their only chance to rally broad international support is to form a loose alliance without a very precise doctrinal platform and possibly even without clearly defined membership. One result of this is to make it doubtful how long an "orthodox" Soviet interpretation of the Communist doctrine will survive at all as an effective influence on Communist thought outside the Soviet Union. Another result is that a number of Communist parties (e.g., the Cuban and perhaps even the Rumanian party) may stay outside both "camps" at least for a time, or may choose a form of association with the Soviets that carries no obligations whatever, and that a number of bilateral criss-cross contacts between parties inside either or outside both camps may continue for a considerable time.

3. A third conclusion is that in this world of uncertainty and flux, the comparatively most stable inter-Communist relations will be those within the immediate power sphere of each of the protagonists—*i.e.*, hegemonial relations of military and economic co-operation in Eastern Europe, and of military, economic, and subversive co-operation in East and South-east Asia. Even though the East European Communist régimes (except for East Germany) can no longer be described as Soviet satellites and have acquired a measure of real independence, the ties of interest underlying the regional alliance continue to be more real than any other ties among Communist parties and are likely to remain.

4. A fourth tentative conclusion is that, contrary to a widespread impression, the schism does not tend to a clear-cut division of spheres of influence, with the Soviets guiding the Communists of the West and the Chinese those of the under-developed world. While the prospects of any form of Communism in the West appear increasingly doubtful, both Moscow and Peking regard the under-developed world as the chief arena of their competition, and both compete for influence on revolutionary nationalist as well as on Communist movements there. In that competition, the Chinese are likely to have more attraction for totalitarian revolutionary movements still fighting for power. But the Soviets may have an advantage with ruling revolutionary parties; they can offer them more and demand less risks.

One final question which is perhaps not strictly within the scope of this article has been touched upon all the time by implication: I mean the future of the conflict between the Soviets and the Western powers. If the "world revolution" no longer has a clearly defined meaning from the viewpoint of Soviet interest; if its promotion ceases to be an objective that is directly and actively pursued; if even its importance as a legitimation of the party dictatorship becomes secondary; if Soviet internal development seems to require a climate of security rather than of permanent tension—what becomes of the need for maintaining a state of permanent conflict with the non-Communist world as such, over and above the pursuit of Russian national interests? A totalitarian ideological dictatorship needs that conflict. A thoroughly de-ideologised, authoritarian régime would no longer need it. The long-term trend of Russian internal development seems clearly to go in the direction from the former to the latter, and the break-up of world Communism has certainly strengthened that trend. It would be foolish for the West not to notice—and welcome—the tendency towards such a change. But it would be equally foolish—and far more dangerous—to regard the change as accomplished before there are direct and unmistakable proofs of it.

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Richard Mayne

A Four-Letter Word

"Well, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we have all heard a great deal this afternoon about 'purity' and 'compassion.' We have been told that certain of the—er—words in this book have appeared before in technical works or that they can be found in early English literature. We have patiently listened to a number of learned quotations which are said to be 'of historical interest.' Some of us may feel that they contain not the slightest jot or tittle of interest whatsoever. We have been lectured at length about 'our Anglo-Saxon heritage.' In this case, ladies and gentlemen, it is nothing more or less than a heritage of filth.

"For what we have to consider—and consider very carefully before we give our verdict—is not this passage or that, not some abstract idea, not some passing reference to contemporary furniture or clothes, but the effect and the tendency of the book taken as a whole. Not a book for specialists, or sophisticated people, or scholars in some museum: but a paperback edition, multiplied by the million, within the reach of any man—or any boy—or any young girl—with idle curiosity and half-a-crown to spend.

"And we have to consider this book not as remote academic professors, not as pedants, but as people, as men and women of the world. And let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen, that the world is not an ivory tower where there are no problems, no dangers, no human weaknesses. The world is full of temptations—temptations of the flesh. And what could be more calculated—more coldly, more callously, more unscrupulously calculated—to arouse temptation and inflame the appetites than passages such as this?

"'. . . Her hungry eyes met his as, ever so slowly, she turned to reveal the warm, full curves of breast and leg. He watched, fascinated, as the covering fell away from the soft white skin. Eagerly, he bent forward. An instant later, lips parted, her head thrown back, Estella surrendered to the moment's sudden succulence, the firm warm flesh that brought the secret juices welling from within her. All too soon they were replete, exhausted. On Sundays, they always bought too big a chicken.' . . ."

THIS IMAGINARY quotation from *Regina v. Epicure Books, Ltd.*, is less far-fetched than it seems. "Hunger and love," said the Buddha, "are at the root of all human history"; and in some ways they're remarkably similar. If one's to be treated as arcane, why not the other? Isaac D'Israeli, in his *Curiosities of Literature*, described at least two peoples whose eating habits showed an almost sexual modesty:

> The Otaheiteans, who are naturally sociable, and very gentle in their manners, feed separately from each other. At the hour of repast, the members of each family divide; two brothers, two sisters, and even husband and wife, father and mother, have each their respective basket. They place themselves at the distance of two or three yards from each other; they turn their backs and take their meal in profound silence.
>
> The Maldivian islanders eat alone. They retire into the most hidden parts of their houses; and they draw down the cloths that serve as blinds to their windows, that they may eat unobserved.

Nor is alimentary prudery unknown in Europe, where moral indignation has often added fervour to strictly medical disapproval of various foods and drinks. Immorality, indeed, was even one of the charges levelled against the early importers and consumers of tea, which the Dutch condemned as "hay-water" and William Cobbett as debilitating "slopkettle." In this context, of course, Paris has long been notorious as a spiritual home both of love and of cookery.

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During the wartime occupation, Parisian cinema audiences are said to have greeted scenes of pre-war banqueting with the kind of ribald cheer usually heard from sailors at a strip-tease performance; and when in mid-November 1964, Paris was the scene of the world's first "International Foodstuffs Week," this was a further reminder that food is a four-letter word.

In the tempting realm of erotic history, periods of licence and repression seem to alternate. The rigour of Puritan England is followed by the Restoration, the age of James Boswell by that of Thomas Bowdler, the rule of Victoria by the reign of Edward VII. If the same is true in the cognate field of carousal, we may well be heading for more abstemious times.

A STRAW IN THE WIND not long ago was a gruff letter in the *Guardian* pointing out that food, after all, is only fuel for the body, and that to devote much attention to its enjoyment is just a form of self-indulgence. So far as I remember, the writer didn't point the usual contrast betwen western or northern affluence and poverty in the rest of the world; perhaps he had in mind the paradox that our own consumption of sugar and spice and exotic foodstuffs actually helps the primary producers to live. His argument, in fact, was moral, not economic; and in a world of gastronomic guides and immoderate business luncheons, where the cookbooks and colour supplements hopelessly entangle eating and drinking with all varieties of snobbery, it was difficult not to sympathise. "'One of the few places in Walsall where one can wear a dinner jacket and be in the majority,' writes a member." "What, no scampi? Luigi, you're slipping." "*Piquez* the *filet de lièvre* before marinating it in a good *vin ordinaire*, then take your *moulinette* and make a *purée* to add to the *roux* you have already prepared with your *beurre fondu*." Don't cookery manuals ever run out of italics? Wouldn't Roscoe and J.B., those eternal devotees of Dover sole and tournedos, sometimes prefer black pudding washed down with Bass?

The beginnings of the food cult aren't easy to trace, partly because the literary evidence is flimsy. As Virginia Woolf remarked, "It is a curious fact that novelists have a way of making us believe that luncheon parties are invariably memorable for something very witty that was said, or for something very wise that was done. But they seldom spare a word for what was eaten." There are, of course, exceptions; and in them, I think, can be found the outlines of a pattern.

ON SOME RECKONINGS, Chaucer's Franklin was one of the earliest epicures in English literature.

To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
For he was Epicurus owne sone . . .
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe.
Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.

Despite some marks of preference and taste—as in the case of the Monk ("A fat swan loved he best of any roost")—the main emphasis here is on plenty. The same continues to be true for several centuries. William Harrison's *Description of England* in 1577, for example, has much to say about the quantity of food available in well-to-do households, but little about its preparation and quality. "In number of dishes and change of meat the nobility of England . . . do most exceed, sith there is no day in manner that passeth over their heads wherein they have not only beef, mutton, veal, lamb, kid, pork, cony, capon, pig, or so many of these as the season yieldeth, but also some portion of the red or fallow deer, beside great variety of fish and wild fowl, and thereto sundry other delicates wherein the sweet hand of Portugal is not wanting; so that for a man to dine with one of them, and to taste of every dish that standeth before him . . . is rather to yield unto a conspiracy with a great deal of meat for the speedy suppression of natural health than the use of a necessary mean to satisfy himself with a competent repast to sustain his body withal." Elsewhere, Harrison complains that "excessive gluttony" from England has even contaminated the Scots, who now "far exceed us in over much and distemperate gormandise, and so ingross their bodies that divers of them do oft become unapt to any other purpose than to spend their time in large tabling and belly cheer."

Such emphasis on sheer quantity may seem to reflect the supposed coarseness of an age

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epitomised for many by Charles Laughton's *Henry VIII*. But gluttony, excessive or not, was a fairly natural weakness in years of regular winter hardship and widespread hunger. Only a decade after Harrison wrote, England was swept by famine. Similar if lesser outbreaks recurred at intervals through the 17th and for much of the 18th centuries. Ireland suffered for even longer, while in France the last real famine was not until 1847. To-day, readers of James Woodforde's *Diary of a Country Parson* may smile at the frequency and gusto with which he describes his substantial meals; but even as late as the 18th century, getting enough to eat was still a serious business. Dr. Johnson, at supper with Boswell, made no bones about it. "'Some people,' said he, 'have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else.'" Indeed, said Boswell, Johnson's appetite "was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness, that while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible." Boswell, himself no paragon, contrasted this behaviour at table with the sterner precepts of No. 206 of *The Rambler*, in which Dr. Johnson had inveighed against "Gulosulus," the archetypical glutton.

Boswell's irony, however, was slightly beside the point. What Johnson had attacked in *The Rambler* was not Gulosulus' overeating, but his now fashionable fastidiousness about food. "Whenever a new sauce is imported or any innovation made in the culinary system, he procures the earliest intelligence, and the most authentic receipt"; "...he is venerated by the professors of epicurism, as the only man who understands the niceties of cookery." This, I suspect, was something new. According to the Shorter *O.E.D.*, it was in the later 18th century that the words "epicure" and "epicurism" acquired these specific connotations. At about the same time, the word "gourmand," which had hitherto simply meant "a glutton," began to be used also of "a connoisseur in eating and drinking." The word "gastronomy," closely followed by "gastronome" and "gastronomic," made its appearance at about the time of Waterloo; "gourmet," in French originally "a wine-taster's assistant," entered English usage with its modern meaning shortly afterwards. And the year 1815 was memorable also for the publication of *The Epicure's Almanack or Calendar of Good Living*—"A Directory to the Taverns, Coffee-houses, Inns, Eating-houses, and other Places of alimentary Resort in the British Metropolis and its Environs: a review of Artists who administer to the Wants and Enjoyments of the Table." The age of good-food guides had begun.

WITH IT, A NEW TONE seemed to enter literary references to food. Whereas earlier writers had treated eating and drinking with matter-of-fact briskness, those of the 19th century give the impression of dwelling on every mouthful with lingering, gloating relish. Even Keats is a borderline example:

> *...he from forth the closet brought a heap*
> *Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;*
> *With jellies soother than the creamy curd,*
> *And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;*
> *Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd*
> *From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,*
> *From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.*

If this, from *The Eve of St Agnes*, serves its purpose, there are other lines, from *Lamia*, which look like a source for James Elroy Flecker; while in some of his letters Keats positively dizzied himself with thoughts of food and drink. "...whenever I can have Claret I must drink it—'tis the only palate affair that I am at all sensual in....For really 'tis so fine—it fills one's mouth with gushing freshness—then goes down cool and feverless..." and so on for a dozen lines, half a dozen similes, and four classical illusions, until he remembers: "I said this same Claret is the only palate-passion I have—I forgot game—I must plead to the breast of a Partridge, the back of a hare, the wing and side of a Pheasant and a Woodcock passim."

What's acceptable in Keats, moreover, becomes irksome and cloying in Charles Lamb. "There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, crackling, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous —O call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat —fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean but a kind of animal manna—or

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rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosial result or common substance."

After this, one begins to appreciate Cobbett: "I can truly say, that I have never known a man 'fond of good eating and drinking,' as it is called; that I have never known such a man (and hundreds I have known) who was worthy of respect." Others later, including Arthur Hugh Clough in *Dipsychus*, lampooned similar sybarites; but Cobbett and Clough notwithstanding, it was Lamb's smacking of the lips that echoed throughout much of the 19th century —Thackeray musing fondly over the penny tarts of his childhood; Meredith, through the mouth of Dr Middleton in *The Egoist*, intoning the virtues of "Senatorial Port"; George Saintsbury lamenting the decline of Oxford Sausages; domestic novelists of the tea-cosy school celebrating muffins and buttered toast; and Dickens, that dark apostle of festivity, repeatedly fulfilling his role as the Christmas hamper of literature.

"It is not merely a coincidence," said George Orwell, "that Dickens never writes about agriculture and writes endlessly about food. He was a Cockney, and London is the centre of the earth in rather the same sense that the belly is the centre of the body. It is a city of consumers, of people who are deeply civilised but not primarily useful." The over-statement was characteristic; but Orwell's remark may help to account both for the rise of self-conscious gastronomy and for some of the uneasiness one feels in its presence. What was changing, fundamentally, was the technique of food production, and with it the balance of supply and demand.

SOME OF THE agricultural improvements which made for greater plenty in the 19th century dated from earlier years; but the industrialisation of food production was essentially a 19th-century phenomenon. It was the blockade of France during the Napoleonic Wars that forced her to develop the sugar-beet industry in the early 1800s; a few years later, in 1810, Appert made the discovery that led to the canning industry. In 1827, evaporated milk was tried but for the first time, and in the 1850s it was being produced industrially. By that time, too, Pasteur was at work on the process that bears his name. The margarine industry arose in the late 1860s. In the following decade, the superfine grinding of wheat made possible much whiter bread, and Cailletet's discoveries on the liquefaction of gases opened the way to industrial refrigeration. Indirectly, all these changes contributed to the rise of the food cult.

Their most obvious result, of course, was to aid the spectacular improvement that now took place in European diet and health. In 16th-century Geneva, the expectation of life at birth had been only twenty-one years. In 1825, it was still only thirty-six: but a century later it had increased to sixty-five years. Plenty, or at least sufficiency, was ceasing to be the privilege of the few. Yet at the same time, as European society in general grew richer, the eating-habits of the well-to-do were also undergoing a change. It was in 1882 that the German statistician, Engel, propounded his so-called First Law: "As revenue increases, so does absolute expenditure on food, but proportionately less than expenditure as a whole." Nevertheless, the impulse to spend more on food is probably endemic. Even well-fed adults are tempted by the fine example of Robert Benchley, who blued his earnings on what he called "life-giving beefsteaks" while his friends invested theirs on Wall Street and lost them in the 1929 crash. But the problem, for the would-be spender, is his limited capacity to eat. Baffled on the score of quantity, he turns to quality: if he can't eat more, then at least, he thinks, he can eat better. Hence, in adequately fed societies, a rising standard of living usually implies a falling consumption of bread. Over the past fifty years in America, for instance, the *per capita* intake of grain and potatoes has halved, while that of fruit, coffee, tea, and cocoa has doubled; and small but equally steady increases have occurred in the average consumption of meat, sugar, eggs, and dairy products. Much the same is true of the eating-habits of prosperous Europeans. In the 19th century, indeed, dietetic experts actually prescribed as "nourishing" meals that were probably too rich in meat, eggs, and cheese.

IF "EATING BETTER" comes up against the same limitations of sheer physical capacity as merely eating more, what is the would-be spender to do? In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Thorstein Veblen hinted pretty broadly at the answer. "The quasi-peaceable gentleman of leisure... not only consumes of the staff of life beyond the minimum required for subsistence and physical efficiency, but his consumption also undergoes

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a specialisation as regards the quality of the foods consumed.... He becomes a connoisseur in creditable viands...." The operative word here is "creditable." "Eating better" no longer means merely eating "better" food in the form of protein rather than starch: it also means eating more *recherché* dishes in surroundings of greater *chic*. Sometimes, the results are paradoxical. In 17th-century England, butter and green vegetables were despised as "poor men's food": in 20th-century Paris, *couscous*—poor men's food with a vengeance—is highly prized and highly priced. In England, while wrapped and ready-sliced snow-white bread is mass-produced for the millions, a minority pays higher prices for brown stone-ground cottage loaves. Meat-and-vegetable stew, under various exotic names, is served with reverent ceremony in a score of continental restaurants. Only the comparatively rich, in fact, can now afford the former peasant dishes that the poor no longer like.

THE FOOD CULT, in other words, is a typical product of the industrial revolution; and how far the process has gone in various countries is less a matter of national character than of comparative industrial development. National differences, of course, are not to be neglected. Englishmen—from William Harrison, who spoke of French cooks as "musical-headed," to Thackeray, who disliked "Frenchified fuss"—have long mistrusted Gallic sauces. But if at one time continental Europeans used to sneer regularly at British and American cooking, the situation's already changing fast. Only recently, the French Government announced plans to speed the industrialisation of bread manufacture, still the prerogative of the small-scale baker. Virginia baked ham is moving in on the French market, and I know at least one Parisian who's enthusiastic about London food. As for the food cult itself, it continues to feed on advertisements and snobbery: but even in the country of Anthelme Brillat-Savarin it's beginning to lack conviction. In so far as it's the outcome of a clash between boundless desire and limited appetite, it corresponds in the field of eating to what D. H. Lawrence called "sex in the head." And although one English friend of mine plans his French travels, so he says, in order to eat each successive course in a separate three-star restaurant, his claim sounds to me like implausible amatory boasting. I may be just an old Puritan, but I'd hate myself in the morning.

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Brian Crozier

Latin American Journey

Lima

THIS IS Indian country. The fact is obtrusive; the observation, trite but fundamental. Chile is largely white and Argentina almost entirely. Exuberant Brazil plays every note in the racial scale, a rainbow of pigmentation. But here in Lima, pure white features are rare and the predominant tint is Indian apricot. The typical citified Indian, made or female, is squat and deep-chested, with aquiline nose and sloping eyes. Here and there *mestisaje* produces women of disturbing and hieratic beauty, delicate of hand and ankle. The Spanish spoken here in this former Viceroyalty of the Spanish empire is purer by far than it is in Chile or Argentina.

As a city, as distinct from its people, Lima, the City of Kings, is a mess and a disappointment. The disappointment is at least partly subjective. On what grounds I know not, I had visualised an old town of winding, tortuous streets revealing at every twist and turn a new gem of colonial architecture. But no: even in the 16th century, the *conquistadores* seem to have opted for the rectangular plan. The gems are there, all right, in the Plaza de Armas and points around, rich with ornate white stone and carved wooden balconies. The Paseo de las Aguas, where the Viceroys drove in State, keeps one or two pink icing sugar structures, but in the main has fallen into decay and been invaded by the people. Lima has spread outwards, with skyscrapers flanking old stones, outwards towards the foothills of the Andes, the nearest of which are now covered with *barriadas*, Lima's equivalent of Santiago's *callampas*, Buenos Aires' *villa miseria*, and Rio's *favelas*. But in between are extensive and elegant residential suburbs, Spanish in style but English in their insistence on separation: the Limeño prefers a house to a flat.

Another discovery: in a winter that extends into spring, Lima is perpetually overcast, but less than ten miles from town the dismal effect of the Humboldt stream peters out and you are in a land of perpetual sunshine. The drive into the foothills, on a good road that flanks the brave, chugging, single-track railway, is a gradual excursion into drama. In an hour or two you are thousands of feet high and would hardly know you had risen but for the pressure in the ears. By this time, the scenery has become massive and rugged, and there is a curious menace in the knowledge that this is just the undemanding beginning. Beyond lie the terrifying peaks and the high valleys of the *altiplano*, windswept and forbidden, but cultivated. There, one knows, the Incas searched for the navel of an empire and founded Cuzco (which in the Quechua tongue means navel).

ONE HAS TO SAY "the Quechua tongue," for the Incas had no written language. How did they do it? Without writing, money, or the wheel, they created a benevolent totalitarian empire whose extent is staggering enough in the jet age but passes belief in a setting of antiquity. One has to evoke this achievement before seeing the present in perspective. Pizarro and his two hundred men utterly destroyed the Inca empire, but the Catholic civilisation they imported into Peru, though it superimposed itself on the native one, neither replaced it nor absorbed it. The Indians went on talking Quechua and other dialects, weaving and metal-

This is the concluding part (Peru, Venezuela, Mexico) of Brian Crozier's Latin American Journal. In the December ENCOUNTER *he reported on Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.*

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working as their ancestors had done, and celebrating the same festivals. They still do.

But the mainspring of Indian pride had snapped. The *conquistadores* pillaged and massacred. The gentle, preordained certainties of life under the Incas had gone. One must suppose the life of the Indians to-day to be nastier and more brutish than it used to be. This would not, perhaps, matter much if the pressure of population on insufficient land had not made itself felt and if Haya de la Torre had not made a generation of Indians aware, and resentful of the fact, that other people lived better. To-day the ideas propagated by Haya's APRA (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*) have become common property, and resentful Indians are not necessarily Apristas. But the awareness of contrasting ways of life has spread, in Peru as in other Latin American countries. Here, too, the magnet of the big city has exerted its power. Lightless, waterless, and largely illiterate, the Indians of the *barriadas* look from the outside upon those who have water, light, and writing, and rub shoulders with them in the streets of Lima.

More, perhaps, has been done to tackle the gigantic arrears of work implied in such contrasts in the first fifteen months of President Belaúnde Terry's term of office than in the previous ten years. This matters, however much one may regret that the Peruvian Army prevented Haya de la Torre from taking office after his narrow victory over Belaúnde in the elections of 1962. It is hard to avoid the feeling that if there were free, fair, and unfettered elections to-morrow, Belaúnde would improve on the 39 per cent of the vote that brought him to power in 1963.

A complex personality, this Belaúnde. His public image to-day is that of a calm and handsome man, at his ease in the atmosphere of co-Presidential pomp that surrounded the recent visit of General de Gaulle to this capital. But his past has included some unseemly turbulence behind the barricades. He has been presented by one observer as "a man clearly consumed with a passion to be President not in order to put into effect any particular programme but simply to be President...." This is no doubt how he looked before he did become President. But to-day his achievements speak for themselves: 100,000 housing units finished or in construction, many new schools, a start at last on land reform under an enlightened law that wisely attaches as much importance to conservation and improvement as to re-distribution of the land. Above all, *cooperación popular*.

DISCOVERING *cooperación popular* has given me my second moment of political enthusiasm since this tour began (the first was Dr. Eduardo Frei's election in Chile). In Inca times and since, the Indians of the high plateau have tackled jobs in common. In this they are not alone: in Indonesia, the traditional principle of mutual service, *gotong rojong*, has been borrowed for the ends of Sukarno's "guided democracy," to give but one example. But in Inca times, communal work was centrally directed and the means at hand, though primitive, were in harmony with the economy. This has been untrue, and becoming still more untrue, of Indian community work in recent centuries. But the principle was still there, and potentially valid. It has been Belaúnde's originality to marry it to contemporary financing and supply. This is not just a brilliant idea, impressive on paper but petering out in the execution. It actually *works*. Acting by presidential decree, Belaúnde set up organisms to deduct the necessary funds from the budgetary allowances of relevant ministries, purchase materials and machinery and send them, together with instructors or supervisors, to areas where communal work projects were planned. This way, two vast roads are being built: the "longitudinal," which follows the line of the Andes, and the "marginal," which also does, but on the jungle side beyond the Cordillera. Schools and houses are going up in the same way, by this marriage of modern technique and communal labour.

I had come early to my appointment with President Belaúnde, quite prepared to wait. But he came out, without formality, taking me by the arm and explaining that he was supposed to say some words to a party of visiting Germans who were about to see some colour slides of Peruvian life. Everything, I'm sorry to say, went wrong. The slides appeared in the wrong order or not at all, or vanished without trace when the President asked for one to be kept on the screen so that he could comment on it. I was reminded, irrelevantly, of Dali's lecture in a deep sea diving suit at the London surrealist exhibition in 1936, when, too, the wrong slides kept appearing on the screen. Soon, to my relief, the President tired of the performance, made his excuses to the Germans, and took me through a series of large offices to one larger

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than the rest. There we sat and he told me about *cooperación popular*.

It was a mobile lecture. At one point he took me to a neighbouring suite to show me huge photographs of Inca terraces built to make the best of thin soil on steep slopes, and a little museum of Inca objects assembled for General de Gaulle's benefit. Then into another room to switch on lights under coloured relief maps so that I could "see" what *cooperación popular* was doing.

I was impressed and infected by his enthusiasm. Never underestimate a man who has been to every part of his country to see for himself what goes on and make contact with the people. Senghor of Senegal is one and Belaúnde is another. He could be the man to lift half Peru into the 20th century.

Caracas

CARACAS is simply a boom town. But a boom town for everybody—for the lightless and waterless *ranchitos* as well as for the oil-rich élite in the Country Club. All are here because they know, or think they know, that the streets of Caracas are paved with oil. Virtually nothing is left of the sleepy *criollo* town that gave birth to Simon Bolívar. What would the Liberator think of the latter-day consequences of liberation?

Skyscrapers and neon signs; the super-highways of the fallen dictator Pérez-Jiménez (waiting now in his Champagne-rich upholstered prison suite for a trial that could do as much harm as good); the Tamanaco Hotel, a playground in a valley that was canefields when somebody[1] had the inspired foresight to buy the site in 1947, defying those who thought him mad; the *ranchos*, a multi-coloured riot of slumdom pouring down the hillsides; all this, and 125 robberies with violence a month (twenty times the London rate, but an improvement on the monthly 200 of a year ago, as the coppers of many lands gathering here for an *Interpol* do were proudly told; the Venezuelans, by the way, have five separate police forces with different functions, a situation that greatly facilitates buck-passing); and urban terrorism and peasant guerrillas and all....

A boom town. The government collects $4½ million *a day* from the oil companies. Doesn't that amount to streets of oil? Even if one admits the proposition that in a young, pushing, self-assertive *nouveau-riche* society, the boys must get jobs and recompense, shouldn't this leave something over, *after* the boys have been duly seen to, for less important things like education, housing, public health, and land reform? Seventy per cent of undergraduates never reach their final year, though this does not mean that they leave the University. Students spend two, three, four years on what is supposed to be their second or third year. If there is talk of sending them down they complain of injustice and of the alleged "tyranny" and "incompetence" of their professors, who have failed to get them through. The illegal Communist Party is particularly interested in failed students and in keeping them in the University where they can organise supplies and information for guerrillas. The monumental Ciudad Universitaria (built, inevitably, under Pérez-Jiménez) was supposed to accommodate 9,000 students and now has some 20,000, rising fast. The four autonomous[2] universities have been asking for a budget of 61 million Bolívares, but all they are getting is 16 million. Standards—can one wonder?—are abysmal. This, however, Bolívar would have recognised. Back from the wars in 1827, the Liberator was discouraged to find how far educational standards had crumbled while he was away.

HOW MANY PEOPLE live in the *ranchos*? Three hundred thousand, 400,000? What does one do with them—dump them back whence they came, give them piped water so that the women don't spend their lives going downhill and up in search of it, or re-house them? P.-J. tried re-housing, but the *ranchitos* weren't to be so easily defeated. After a short trial in their bright new flats, they started building *ranchos* on the grounds of the vast new blocks. So much handier than flats if you want to keep goats and chickens.

A boom town, even though it hasn't been booming much lately. Cadillacs with unflattened dents are to be seen, and this, I am told, is to be considered "a bad sign." In fact, business went stagnant in September and October, when ex-President Betancourt was fighting for the right to complete his constitutional term of

[1] His name is Arrigo Righi and I met him. He is an Italian American with a North Country wife. They occupy a corner of the Hotel and have their private garden, rich with the orchids he brings back from his expeditions in the interior.

[2] So called because the government cannot tell them how to run their own affairs or spend their allocations.

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office and hand over to a duly elected successor. That battle was won, as everyone knows, and business is beginning to pick up again. A good deal of building is now going on, though nothing compared to the old days of P.-J.

I almost wrote the "good" old days of P.-J., nostalgia for the deposed dictator being almost as strong here as it is in Buenos Aires. Here, however, unlike in Argentina, it is most pronounced among the well-to-do and the affluent professional middle class. "In the old days, you could walk the streets unafraid, but now...." This is a remark one often hears, in various forms, such as: "In the old days, cars didn't hoot in traffic jams—now everybody hoots, so it's pandemonium...."

This variant is more important than it sounds, not because there are ever more cars, so that traffic jams are longer and pandemonium greater, but because it is the signpost to a state of mind. The dictatorship was simple: orders were given and people obeyed, not reasoning why but because of the implied "or else." The advent of a democracy was interpreted, quite literally, as a free-for-all. Henceforth, it was presumably all right to hoot one's horn, even if the law said no, and equally all right to waylay people, debag executives with access to safes in offices, and hit old ladies over the head for the sake of their handbags. Since democracy is, above all, a state of mind, the equation of freedom with licence showed, not necessarily that Venezuela wasn't "ripe for democracy" (no one is, at first), but that the apprenticeship would be long.

BETANCOURT WAS THE right man to make a start. He had served his time in gaol and survived his early infection with Communism (which he caught from Mexican cell-mates). He has many enemies, within his *Acción Democrática* party as elsewhere, but everybody recognises that he was somebody, like him or not. Nobody, even among his supporters, goes so far as to claim the same for his successor, Raúl Leoni. Once, they will tell you, Leoni, too, had revolutionary fire in his belly. Now, like Illia of Argentina, he is dismissed, with disappointed affection, as *un buen abuelo*—a nice grandfather. The 1963 elections brought *Acción Democrática* back to office but hardly to power, and ever since Leoni has been locked in discussions designed to give him a workable Congressional majority.[3] This is conducive to horse-bargaining but not to active government.

ACCIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA (AD) is a spiritual offshoot of Haya de la Torre's APRA, and like APRA, has seen history by-pass its original doctrines. It has, for instance, seen capitalism—especially American capitalism—change its character; as Luis Esteban Rey, editor of *La República*, and other intellectuals who chose exile in Paris while P.-J. was in power, freely admit. The change and the admission have created a dichotomy, which Betancourt resolved pragmatically by making leftist speeches while keeping in with the Right. This displeased the younger idealists of the party, who broke away to form the more radical *Unión Republicana Democrática* (URD) and the far-Left *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR). As the URD is one of the groups Leoni has been negotiating with in his search for a viable majority, his party's eventual relationship with foreign and local capital remains in doubt.

As in other new countries without a civil service to speak of, the ruling party fills the administrative jobs and this, in turn, creates a bias in favour of State intervention that has nothing to do with doctrine, but which doctrine can be called upon to rationalise and sanctify. Sometimes the bias, in alliance with economic nationalism, has damaging consequences: not long ago, for instance, the government forced the Ford assembly plant to close temporarily because it was not using the required percentage of locally manufactured parts (these being in inadequate supply). The point, one supposes, could have been made just as well by, say, a well-calculated fine, without throwing people out of work and disrupting production.

As it happens, Venezuela has an enlightened capitalist Right (as well as a more reactionary one). One could hardly, for instance, deny the adjective to Eugenio Mendoza, whose money-making activities include cement, machinery, and construction in various forms, but who uses his money to finance polio research and other philanthropies. One of the most interesting experiments with which Mendoza is associated (together with the Venezuelan State and the Ford Foundation) is the *Instituto Nacional de Capacitación Educativo* which trains some 60,000 underprivileged youths (14 to 17) for productive jobs. Another piece of "enlightened capitalism" is IVAC (*Institución Venezolana de Acción Communitaria*), which runs courses for

[3] These have succeeded since I left Caracas.

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peasants in husbandry, hygiene, and allied subjects.

IVAC thus touches the heart of Venezuela's land problem, which is education and technical assistance. In terms of human material, the Venezuelan peasant ranges from poor to very backward, from medieval to prehistoric. At the lowest end, the Indian *conuqueros* cut the jungle, plant their crops, burn everything, and move on. To give such people land carved out of large estates, without at the same time giving them the technical and financial means to make the land pay, does not constitute "land reform." Yet this, too often, is what has happened. Tens of thousands of peasants have been given land, but many of them have deserted it to swell the army of *ranchitos* looking down on Caracas and other cities from the envious hills. So far, Venezuela has nothing to show that compares with Belaúnde's *Cooperación popular* in Peru. A simple fact underlines the extent of the failure to date: this year, for the first time, Venezuela has had to import maize and the black beans that provide its staple diet. The provider was Mexico.

Clearly, the apprenticeship is going to take time. But in two respects, Venezuela has enviable advantages. One is self-evident: the prodigious daily outpouring of wealth from oil is going to make it difficult to sink the Venezuelan State, however hard the corrupt and the inefficient try. The other, which gives Venezuela a vocation for egalitarianism, is that this country, almost alone in Latin America, has no natural oligarchy. A man is somebody because of his wealth—which the poorest have been known to acquire—not because his forefathers became landowners under Spanish rule. In the long run, this could be decisive for the future of democracy in this tropical un-Paradise.

Mexico City

MEXICO is a violent country that has been at peace over forty years. But one is conscious here, as one is in Peru, of a continuing underlying vocation of violence. One feels, indeed, that the Mexicans themselves are aware of it and determined that it shall never break out again as in the bloody time of the upheaval that began four years before the First World War and that continues to dominate Mexican public life.

Has there ever been a school of painting as violent as that of the modern Mexican muralists? Diego Rivera, the best known, is also the most pacific, and his naïve Marxist symbols, despite the inevitable visceral touches, coalesce into a relatively mild and pallid harmony. But Orozco! But Siqueiros! Siqueiros especially, with his piled-up *impasto*, converting flesh into abrasive stone, his daring, camera-lens foreshortening—Mantegna to the *n*th power, with giant hands reaching out in third dimension from the receding wall... a universe of hate, suffering and disembowelment that denies the existence or even the possibility of compassion, a universe that reduces the works of fellow-artists to pigmy-sanity on the top floor of the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

I took up Spanish in 1943 with the ambition to live in Mexico, but this, twenty-one years later, is my first visit. And now I find myself suffering from the most futile of nostalgias—for things that never even happened. But discarding inexistent memories, it is yet possible to enjoy and admire to-day's reality.

The decaying splendours of Buenos Aires do, I suppose, challenge comparison with Mexico City, but the fact that they are decaying is obtrusive. Here is a true capital for a new world, both dynamic and harmonious, the noble vista of the Paseo de la Reforma culminating inevitably in the generous serenity of the Chapultepec gardens, shimmering in the warm, crisp air of the *altiplano*. There in the gardens, the Mexicans have built a complex of museums that takes the breath away for its triumphant marriage of boldness, functional perfection and harmony. A reclining 8 in design, the Museum of Contemporary Art is a "machine for seeing paintings" of a kind that doesn't exist in London or Paris (though New York's Guggenheim is a challenger). But the greatest triumph is the new Museum of Anthropology, in which the talents of the second wave of muralists (Anguiano, Gonzalez Caramena, Chavel Morado and others) have been requisitioned to reconstitute and enliven the dead past of Maya and Aztec stones. It is a disturbingly successful exercise for here, too, is an oppressive universe of total compliance with sanguinary orders. The courtyard, though it has nothing to do with archaeology, is vast and original, kept permanently fresh by an inverted fountain that sheds its water downward.

A MORE FAR-REACHING originality is that of Mexico's political system, which might be described as a democratic monolith. Democratic because political parties exist and compete, and speech is free; monolithic because in the last resort nothing, in public life, escapes the control

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of the ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*. This is another of the paradoxes that abound in Mexico. The PRI is "revolutionary" because everything it does is in the name of the great Mexican revolution, and "institutional" because of its unshakeable hold on power. Yet it is doubly tolerant, both of the opposition parties, which are guaranteed a reasonable number of seats in Congress, and of diverse and even contradictory tendencies within itself. With magisterial impartiality, the PRI subsidises newspapers of conflicting tendencies (some of which could not survive for long without such subsidies) and knows that in the last analysis it holds the whip-hand over recalcitrants by its total control of newsprint.[4] Similarly the two trade union groups, the CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers) and the CROC (Revolutionary Confederation of Workers & Peasants), though nominally autonomous, know that in the last resort they cannot oppose the PRI in major matters. This does not, however, mean that the Mexican trade unions are instruments of planning policy as they are in the Soviet Union. There are strikes, though not too often; the President intervenes, especially if a public utility is threatened. The unions make an extravagant wage claim, of the order, it is said, of 45 per cent; the government-controlled industry makes a more modest counter-proposal; the machinery of arbitration goes into gear, and in the end the workers get the 15 per cent they were given to understand in the first place that they were going to get. (This year, for the first time, the workers will share 20 per cent of the net profits of the companies that employ them, under a constitutional amendment passed in 1962.)

Clearly such a system is wide open to abuses, and doubtless abuses exist, especially in the country where the local boss (*cacique*) is often as monstrously tyrannical as were the landowners displaced by the revolution. Doubtless, too, there is corruption in office. But the abuses inherent in the system are limited by the inalienable principle of non-re-election, so that a man's capacity for tyranny is cut short and new blood is always forthcoming. More important still, the system visibly works and has given Mexico a stability enviable by any standards and almost unique in South America. Moreover, the system has shown over the past decade that it is not incompatible with economic progress.

[4] Perhaps this is why the Mexican press, though worthy, is unspeakably dull.

Since political stability is the first condition of economic growth, this is perhaps not surprising. But there is room for surprise if one considers the length and number of the State's economic tentacles. In theory, enterprise is free in Mexico, but the reservations are so extensive that the freedom is highly qualified. The Constitution regulates the ownership of land, reserves rights to mineral resources, and guarantees the State's monopoly of the petrol and electrical industries. All banking is in State hands (though the First National City Bank of New York has a functioning office, other foreign banks are limited to "representative" offices that do no business). As for foreign companies, they are welcome, so long as the Mexican States holds 51 per cent of the shares.

ON PAPER, this looks like a recipe for inefficiency and immobility. But in practice, State intervention is cautious and limited. The State's presence and power must be manifest, but it doesn't follow that the State itself manages everything. It has been argued in fact that the omnipresence of the State is a guarantee that ultimate control of Mexico's economic destiny shall never pass into the hands of the clever foreigners and Spanish-descended Mexicans. The PRI, which is the revolution institutionalised, is strictly *mestizo*; and the Indians, whose emancipation the revolution was supposed to have accomplished, are the PRI's charges.

And so, in fact, Mexico grows: this year's GNP will probably be between 6 and 7 per cent higher than last year's, which was 5½ per cent higher than in 1962. This is good, indeed massively encouraging in comparison with other Latin American countries. Professor W. W. Rostow seems to have been right when he wrote, several years ago, that Mexico was "taking off." But let nobody for a moment suppose that Mexico has solved its crushing problem of poverty, or even that it is likely to do so within the foreseeable future. Not only is the population exploding but its *rate* of explosion is on the increase: between 1940 and 1950 it grew "only" by 2·8 per cent a year; now the rate has reached 3·3 per cent. There is the new factor of medical science, and the old factor of the Church, whose influence is strong enough to have prevented birth control. Historically, Mexico was the first Latin American country to launch land reform. But the purpose of it was social and political, not economic. To-day, thirty or forty years later, the consequences of

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a non-economic approach are obvious. Outside the communal *ejido* system, Mexico has some highly efficient and competitive agriculture; but the *ejido* system itself—the heart of the land reform—is, by and large, a failure. Given the aridity of the *altiplano* and the scarcity of usable land, there is probably no solution to Mexico's rural poverty by strictly agricultural methods. At best, industrialisation and education will absorb the next generation of young peasants; the best the older ones can hope for is to die off, poor to the end. It is, I was told, as brutal and simple as that.

I END this journal with a marginal note and a generalisation. Marginally, I record the fact that it is exceedingly difficult to meet Mexicans in Mexico. Invariably the impressive Spanish-speaking personages I met were Spanish, or Argentine, or Peruvian. One of the Spaniards (or ex-Spaniards), Dr. Víctor Alba—well known in ENCOUNTER circles—revealed a most striking capacity for social indignation (against Latin America's oligarchies) which alone, I am almost tempted to say, would show that he was not born in these parts.

The generalisation is that everywhere the most pressing problem is the land, and almost everywhere the problem is neglected or tackled half-heartedly or tackled the wrong way. Yet if it is not tackled soon (and the right way), many of the real achievements in other spheres will turn out to be valueless. For the present path is leading to violence, political chaos, and economic retrogression. Some, at least, of the Latin American leaders I met are aware of this; there is thus hope that it may never happen.

Four Poems Towards A Conception

The City Hospital

Lying here I feel cool ferns, every frond;
Dying I see great oaks, every leaf—
I who used to sleep in the high forest
And dream of life in the rushing city.

Lost on a Night Mountain

We stopped, too full of fears to jump over
The stones of the still milky stream ahead;
After we saw it was dry moon-shadow
Our qualms flew away with the warm wind.

The Barren Field

How the poor ruined farmer will laugh
When he is wise enough to know
That the silliest prayer or rite
At planting would have saved his field.

The Judas-tree in Late Spring

My refusal to write a single line
Exulting with the Judas-tree
Has kept Spring burning four days longer
Than my friends had dared predict.

Philip Roberts

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POETRY

A Talk with Robert Lowell

By A. Alvarez

THIS CONVERSATION took place in the studio where Robert Lowell works, a couple of floors above his family apartment. It's a high, very private room in a pleasantly old-fashioned block just off Central Park West. The view is undramatic yet specifically New York: the oddly shapeless backs of big buildings, water-towers, airshafts, and those deep narrow wells called "backyards." Unlike most New York flats, this one is peculiarly silent. The perpetual honking of car horns never penetrates this far back. Only occasionally the central heating creaks and bangs mildly. Otherwise there is nothing to distract you.

Lowell himself, now in his middle forties, is a big man, yet rather frail. His manner is gentle, almost saintly, although he can, when appropriate, be tart enough in his comments, a mixture of shyness and stringency, relaxed yet with a great deal in reserve. He is now at the height of his creative powers as a poet. He began his career as something of a prodigy, with two brilliant and influential books published in his middle twenties: *Land of Unlikeness* and *Lord Weary's Castle*. Like Dylan Thomas, he seemed to have given a new edge to poetic language, post-Eliot, symbolic, Catholic, and with powerfully original rhythms. Then there was a long pause, until thirteen years later he produced *Life Studies*—totally new, moving in a totally different direction, and even more influential. The Catholicism and symbolism had gone; the texture was simpler and the effort was to deal with his experience as nakedly as possible, letting the flow of feeling regulate the rhythmical pattern, which remained as insistently individual as ever. That was in 1959. In 1962 he published an extraordinary book of free translations called *Imitations*, really original variations by Lowell on themes from other poets. He has also translated Racine's *Phèdre* and recently completed a play of his own, *The Old Glory*, based on short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, which Jonathan Miller has just directed in New York with success. In *Imitations* and in the collection of new poems which he has made since then and which has just been published in the States, Lowell seems to have reached a new stage of technical and emotional fluency. In his early poems the power was sometimes short-circuited by mannerisms: the language could be too clotted, the rhythms almost predictably idiosyncratic. In *Life Studies* these mannerisms were reversed: some of the weaker poems were so loose, almost prattling, that the poetic urgency seemed to drain away in personal reminiscence. (I had better admit that this is critical hindsight. Each book of Lowell's seems, to an extraordinary degree, complete and resolved in itself. Then the next one appears and goes so unexpectedly far beyond the last that you have to revise your demands. He has, in short, a genius for constantly setting and then raising the standards by which his own work is to be judged.) But since *Imitations* the barriers have been down between his technique and his emotional resources, his imaginative power effortlessly matching the depth and scope and continual richness of his responses. His work now has that rare aliveness and vibration that comes only in the maturity of a major artist.

When we talked he had recently been ill and his reactions had the slightly tentative directness and openness, that curiously new-born quality, which goes with convalescence. And this tone seemed to match very precisely the raw, nervous atmosphere of New York in the period following President Kennedy's assassination, with its odd feeling of general psychic shock and displacement.

I began by asking him why the American artists, who are usually not in the least concerned with politicians, seemed to identify so closely with the dead President.

LOWELL: Well, Kennedy represents a side of America that is appealing to the artist in retrospect, a certain heroism. You feel in certain terms he really was a martyr in his death; that

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he was reckless, went further than the office called for, and perhaps that he was fated to be killed. That's an image one could treasure, and it stirs one.

—But it's not just an image that concerns you. Don't you identify more with Kennedy than with other Presidents, because he somehow changed the position of the artist in American society, raised his status, and made him more acceptable by his obvious and publicly manifested interest in the cultural life of the country? I mean he invited artists and intellectuals to the Inauguration and to those White House dinner parties, he gave them medals and awards, he brought August Heckscher to the White House as his Special Consultant on the Arts, and so on.

Lowell: I think you can take two more or less opposed lines on Kennedy: that the arts were in some way getting, though they haven't become more popular, more and more prestige, so that finally (as Hannah Arendt says) it wasn't so much that Kennedy wanted to do anything for the arts but just his own personal ambition wanted to include the arts, and have the artists come to the White House.... But it was part of his ambition to tap this latent prestige of the arts. Well, the other line is that he was really a very exceptional President who broke the ice and put the artists sort of in the front window for a moment.

—Yet those dinner parties of Kennedy's did have some curious side-effects, didn't they? Weren't they, if nothing else, a sign of change? I mean when Eisenhower was President you felt that the country was being run exclusively by the Pentagon and those awful golfing big-business cronies of his. With Kennedy there did seem some vague, fragile possibility of some kind of connection, even mutual interchange, between the representatives of the cultural life of the country and those of the world of power.

Lowell: I think of Edmund Wilson's comment. Arthur Schlesinger asked him how he felt about being invited to the White House to dinner and Wilson said "Oh, it was bigger than other dinners!..." I was invited to the White House for Malraux's dinner there. Kennedy made a rather graceful joke that "the White House was becoming almost a café for intellectuals...." Then we all drank a great deal at the White House, and had to sort of be told not to take our champagne into the concert, and to put our cigarettes out like children—though nicely, it wasn't peremptory. Then the next morning you read that the Seventh Fleet had been sent somewhere in Asia and you had a funny feeling of how unimportant the artist really was: that this was sort of window dressing and that the real government was somewhere else, and that something much closer to the Pentagon was really ruling the country. And maybe this is how it must be.

You see, I have a feeling that the arts are in a very funny position now—that we are free to say what we want to, and somehow what we want to say is the confusion and sadness and incoherence of the human condition. Anyone running a government must say the opposite of that: that it can be solved. He must take an optimistic stance. I don't know why the arts say this so strongly. It may be a more miserable time, more than others, with the world liable to blow up. We're in some transition domestically: I mean in one's family life and everything else. There are new moral possibilities, new moral incoherence. It's a very confused moment. And for some reason it's almost a dogma with us: we'll show that confusion.

—The confusion has been staring right at you since the events in Dallas, hasn't it? But I wonder if the pervasiveness and inescapability of it all isn't emphasized by the American preoccupation with psycho-analysis. Everybody is in analysis. It's the dominant mode for the American interpretation of reality. And whatever you think about it, it does at least force one to recognise the answering confusion in oneself. Analysis has made it very difficult to live purely *rationally and on the surface, at least with any conviction.*

Lowell: Well, I get a funny thing from psycho-analysis. I mean Freud is the man who moves me most: and his case histories, and the book on dreams, read almost like a late Russian novel to me—with a scientific rather than a novelist's mind. They have a sort of marvellous old-order quality to them, though he is the father of the new order, almost the opposite of what psycho-analysis has been since. All that human sort of colour and sadness, that long German-Austrian and Jewish culture that Freud had, seems something in the past; but it was still real to him. There is something rather beautiful and sad and intricate about Freud that seems to have gone out of psycho-analysis; it's become a way of looking at things.

—What I suppose you're getting at is a certain moral rooted quality in Freud—a sense of continuing cultural tradition which you don't get in the orthodox Freudians.

Lowell: I was brought up as an Episcopalian Protestant, with a good deal of Bible reading at school. We had a rather sceptical attitude, but we were rather saturated (even in this late day) with it. And it strikes me this may be just true of my own peculiar history: brought up as a Protestant, then a Catholic convert. When that goes and we look at it another way, Freud

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seems the only religious teacher. I have by no means a technical understanding of Freud, but he's very much part of my life. He seems unique among the non-fictional teachers of the century. He's a prophet. I think somehow he continues both the Jewish and Christian tradition, and puts it maybe in a much more rational position. I find nothing bores me more than someone who has all the orthodox sort of Freudian answers like the Catechism, but what I find about Freud is that he provides the conditions that one must think in. I'm thinking of my own case: I'm one-eighth Jewish and seven-eighths non-Jewish and our culture seems sort of that way. We never supplied what the Jewish tradition did—our culture never supplied the equivalent of that. And now to-day, we can't. The two thinkers, non-fictional thinkers, who influence and are never out of one's mind are Marx and Freud.

—Now this, of course, is particularly so in New York, which is enormously Jewish in its whole atmosphere, isn't it? The intellectual life is almost entirely Jewish, most of the entertaining is Jewish, the ways of eating are Jewish, and so on.

LOWELL: Yes, and I think there wouldn't be any active American culture now without the Jewish element. They are small in numbers, but they're a leaven that changes the whole intellectual, cultural world of America. And it's a painful reality, I think, that a minority should have such liveliness and vigour that you're at a loss why the rest of the country doesn't equal that.

—There is every reason why the Jews should feel at home in the States. I mean American democracy was based, theoretically, on certain abstract principles which were lacking in Europe. So the Jews, as more or less permanent outsiders in Europe, would have responded to America very strongly.

LOWELL: I think of Jefferson and the whole idealism—there are very few countries founded on a declaration the way ours was. There's something biblical and Jewish about that—Messianic. It is both what is unreal about America and what's noble about America. Violence and idealism have some occult connection. I remember reading Henry Adams' *History of Jefferson and Madison*—it's rather sceptical history, far from idealising America (though it's different from Adams' later position). I noticed the strange pride that Adams takes in American gunnery—it's almost wild-Western: that the American ships shot better than the English ships and that Andrew Jackson's artillery shot better than the British artillery. All that had some great symbolic significance to him. We seem to be a very sheer country: I mean power is something everyone must have, because the country's powerful. The ideal isn't real unless it's somehow backed by power. Robert Frost was very much criticised for his remark about poetry and power: "We must have more of both." Well, he seemed to rejoice in that. But in a way I feel it is our curse that we can't disentangle those two things.

—Well, power and violence—above all, violence—are things you simply can't get away from in the States: they seem to come in at you from every direction.

LOWELL: I don't know where it comes from—whether it's the American genius, or just the chaos of our schools and that young people are

Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN *was the last President of the United States who could genuinely use words. He and Thomas Jefferson are perhaps the only presidents with this gift. Without his best speeches, Lincoln would have been less great as a man of action; had he not been a great statesman, he could not have written his speeches. He knew his occasion and sensed that whatever he said must have the gravity and brevity of an act of state.*

Last spring I was talking about the Gettysburg Address to a friend who is also a man of letters. He pointed out to me its curious, insistent use of birth images: "brought forth," "conceived," "created," and finally, a "new birth of freedom."

Birth and Death!

The Gettysburg Address is a symbolic and sacramental act. Its verbal quality is resonance combined with a logical, matter-of-fact, prosaic brevity. It is part of the battle, a last military push that alters and adds significance to the previous military manoeuvres. In his words, Lincoln symbolically died, just as the Union soldiers really died—and as he himself was soon really to die. By his words, he gave the field of battle a symbolic significance that it had lacked. For us and our country, he left Jefferson's ideals of freedom and equality joined to the Christian sacrificial act of death and rebirth. I believe this is a meaning that goes beyond sect or religion and beyond peace and war, and is now part of our lives as a challenge, obstacle, and hope. Lincoln's occasional speech of a hundred years ago still rings today when our country struggles with four almost insoluble spiritual problems: how to join equality to excellence, how to join liberty to justice, how to avoid destroying or being destroyed by nuclear power, and how to complete the emancipation of the slaves.

Robert Lowell

(in *Lincoln & The Gettysburg Address*, just published by the University of Illinois Press.)

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badly brought up—but I think it has something to do with both the idealism and the power of the country. Other things are boring for these young people, and violence isn't boring. We have a thing for the Western movie: some sort of faith that the man who can draw most quickly is the real hero. He's proved himself. Yet that is a terribly artificial standard; the real hero might be someone who'd never get his pistol out of the holster, stumbling about, near-sighted. We don't want to admit that. It's deep in us that the man who draws first somehow has proved himself.

—But this violence and heroism is in key with the tone of the country: with the speed, the rawness, the vast size, the emptiness and the aggression of the cities.

LOWELL: I feel that it's a very naked country; the sort of flesh that goes on the skeleton and the nervous system that works is very meagre. And we come to Norman Mailer—he has this peculiar thing, he's cursed with it. The country works so well; it's powerful; therefore the writers should be on an enormous scale. And why can't we produce an enormous novel, the way the Russians did in the nineteenth century? It's quite beyond our powers, apparently, though maybe some American will appear who'll disprove that. But there's a burden on Mailer to make that attempt, and we're cursed with the ambitious big novel. Yet it's not entirely a curse and Mailer is genuinely a hero and every so often he really does have the flesh so that he's at least the greatest of our journalists, I think; suddenly all those enormous ambitions get clothed for a moment.

—So you think that this ambition and power—the kind of thing you get in Mailer—is specifically an American characteristic?

LOWELL: We have some impatience with prosaic, everyday things of life—I think those hurt us. That sort of whimsical patience that other countries may have—that's really painful to endure: to be minor. We leap for the sublime. You might almost say American literature and culture begins with *Paradise Lost*. I always think there are two great symbolic figures that stand behind American ambition and culture. One is Milton's Lucifer and the other is Captain Ahab: these two sublime ambitions that are doomed and ready, for their idealism, to face any amount of violence.

—Does this literary, spiritual quality also affect America's political behaviour?

LOWELL: Our world position is a curious sort of fulfilment of a national characteristic: that we're a country founded on a constitution. That makes us rather different from the usual country founded on a history and a culture. We were founded on a Declaration, on the Constitution, on Principles, and we've always had the ideal of "saving the world." And that comes close to perhaps destroying the world. Suddenly it is as though this really terrible nightmare has come true, that we are suddenly in a position where we might destroy the world, and that is very closely allied to saving it. We might blow up Cuba to save ourselves and then the whole world would blow up. Yet it would come in the guise of an idealistic stroke.

—But the trouble with this idealism is that it seems so unqualified at times: I mean the anti-Communism, you know. The anti-totalitarianism is so overwhelming that it becomes at times something very like another form of totalitarianism, certainly, a kind of total stupidity.

LOWELL: Yes, I suppose this is too apocalyptic to put it this way, but it is the Ahab story of having to murder evil: and you may murder all the good with it if it gets desperate enough to struggle. Russia is in somewhat the same position, of course. It is a world situation now. But its hits our genius in a very strange way, and what's best in our country in a way is united with this, and what's worst and most dangerous and naked and inhuman about us gets swept up into this ideal. And also this thing that we won't let go, a kind of energy and power of imagination, of throwing yourself all out into something.

—And does this affect the arts—the idea of never having minor art, the one thing no one can bear to be is minor?

LOWELL: Yes. It's often said that we have no minor poets in America, though of course we do; but that seems an oddly ignoble ambition. Even the minor poet reaches for the sublime.

—What about the theory that sociology is taking over the arts? Isn't there a perfectly good case to be made for the first great American novel being not Moby Dick *or* The Scarlet Letter *but de Tocqueville's* Democracy in America?

LOWELL: But would you call de Tocqueville a sociologist? His book still seems the best book on America, and it's an oddly unique book. He somehow lived it, yet it's a rather abstract book. Still, it's a book he couldn't have written without having visited America and lived through it; that's always there.

—But this abstractness is somehow typical: for example, the big political issues which are plaguing you now—"Civil rights" and "poverty"—are essentially moral, slightly abstract issues, not party issues. I mean that, except for the extremists on the right, both parties agree that these are national sicknesses that must be cured. They merely disagree about the kind and the quantity of medicine needed.

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LOWELL: This may not answer what you're after at all. The biggest issue in the country now is civil rights. We're bound to act morally on this and, of course, there's the danger that the morals may cut people's legs off; they may be simplified. The only opposition to civil rights is an inarticulate immoral position that has a certain human appeal, I think—the Southern. But it's morally indefensible. This seems to come down all the way from the Civil War, that the Southerner's morally inarticulate. One felt this more strongly in the 'thirties when there was a "Southern Renaissance" in culture. It was, perhaps, the strongest single element in American culture: this Southern position which somehow was quite human and observant (in some ways typically American, but in others not), and it was a sort of position with its moral head cut off. Somehow this whole Southern view didn't make sense morally; but it was observant of life and talked a great deal about the "tragedy of life." The Southerners no longer seem to have that strength. When you have a rather disagreeable reactionary Southerner talking, it is terrible that he doesn't make more sense, moral sense.

—Does this lack of "moral sense" have something to do with the general rootlessness and mobility of American life? It is something that strikes the visitor very hard: nothing seems to last, neither objects, nor relationships, nor even the landscape. And people are always drifting restlessly from one city to another, eternally migrating.

LOWELL: The mobility I know most about in America is New York City. And this is such a cliché I blush to utter it. But you go from New York to London—and they're two cities in many ways much alike, maybe essentially alike—but the superficial difference hits you terribly hard. You can't touch a stone in London that doesn't point backwards into history; while even for an American city, New York seems to have no past. And yet it's the only city that sort of provides an intellectual, human continuum to live in. Of course you don't have to live in New York. Many people loathe living in it. But still, if you removed it, you'd be cutting out the heart of American culture. Yet it is a heart with no past. The New York of fifty years ago is utterly gone and there are no landmarks; the record of the city doesn't point back into the past. It has that sheer presence which, I think, is not the image of mobility you talk about.

—This kind of driving force, moving into the future all the time, without a past at all, as though the wake were closing up behind it....

LOWELL: And it has a great sheer feeling of utter freedom. And then when one thinks back a little bit, it seems all confused and naked.

—Do you think this freedom is behind the cult of experimentalism of America in the arts, the demand that no two poets, no two major poets in America ever write the same?

LOWELL: Well, certainly they are not burdened down with this sort of baggage of life the English poet carries. I mean what everyone finds wrong with American culture is the monotony of the sublime. I've never lived anywhere else, but I feel it is extreme (and perhaps unique, even) about America, that the artist's existence becomes his art. He is re-born in it, and he hardly exists without it. There's that feeling, perhaps.

—That he himself is as mobile as the society, he has no roots in the family, no real social niche, no sense of permanence?

LOWELL: A friend of mine went to London this summer. He was utterly delighted with it and said, "It's so human" (he comes from the South). "And its people were so polite, and it just seemed unimaginably gentle and wonderful in a way an American city isn't." But he avoided meeting any English literary people; he felt that England was a disaster for the literary man, that he was hampered at every step with "cautions and nots and things." That shows the American temperament, the impatience.

—Well, the major part of these "cautions and nots and things" is the compulsory Cult of the Amateur in England—which you certainly don't suffer from in the States.

LOWELL: We are talking about the arts being, perhaps, more a profession in the States. I don't know enough about Englishmen or any other country to make a comparison. But I feel this in meeting people, that we have a feeling the arts should be "all out"—you're in it, you're all out in it, and you're not ashamed to talk about it endlessly, sheerly. That would seem embarrassing to an Englishman, and inhuman, probably, to be that "all out" about it. I guess the American finds something a little uninvigorating about the Englishman that he doesn't do that.

—There is this terrible feeling in England that excellence is something that, in a sense, one ought to feel apologetic about.

LOWELL: Done with your left hand, and it's always done with both your hands in America. We were talking about it earlier: the artist finds new life in his art and almost sheds his other life.

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THEATRE

Shows of Strength

By John Gross

WHEN SOMEONE came up to Louis Jouvet after a performance of *L'Avare* and reproached him for not having respected the author's intentions, he is supposed to have fired back: "*Tu lui as téléphoné?*" Shakespeare's number doesn't answer, either; and the strongest argument for liberty of interpretation in producing his work is that there can never be a definitive authorised version anyway. All that can reasonably be asked for is a credible version, one which tries to honour the text and elicits readings rather than imposing them. A producer is neither duty bound to toe some hypothetical line, nor completely at liberty: he is free to choose, but his range of choice is limited. Not all that limited: a production of *Julius Cæsar*, for instance, could with equal warrant stress either the over-weening Cæsar or the indispensable Cæsar, the disinterested Brutus or the self-deluded Brutus, the impassioned Antony or the calculating Antony. But what is not permitted, if either the true impact or the inner coherence of the play is to be preserved, is to follow Mr. Lindsay Anderson's course at the Royal Court in presenting Cæsar as a testy headmaster on the verge of a nervous breakdown, robbing Brutus of his dignity, and reducing Antony's rhetoric to not much more than gabble.

Julius Cæsar is a problem play in the deepest sense—it deals with problems which are perennial, and can admit of no clear-cut solution. All the leading characters possess qualities which are both necessary to the well-being of a state, and potentially dangerous: authority, idealism, boldness, the powers of persuasion. They are all to some extent ambiguous figures —Shakespeare has distributed the rights and wrongs amongst them, though not equally. It may be hard for us to swallow in the 20th century (it was hard enough for a Hazlitt or a Swinburne in the 19th), but in itself the death of Cæsar solves nothing, and the Elizabethans dreaded a power vacuum more than the abuse of power. Cæsar's presence is far more oppressive after the assassination than before (both Brutus and Cassius yield to him with their dying words), and by the end of the play a second Cæsar is moving into position.

The director whose over-riding aim is to strike down Cæsar therefore finds that he has been left holding the last two acts without knowing quite what to do with them. But even a strongly one-sided production (such as Orson Welles' before the war, if report can be trusted) may at least light up certain areas of the play. Casual details can suddenly acquire grim undertones ("Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Cæsar's images, are put to silence"); while the dictator who boasts that he is more dangerous than Danger ("We are two lions littered in one day/And I the elder and more terrible") does, after all, have the Mussolini touch. A good anti-authoritarian production might run counter to the play's sense for much of its length, and yet contain its own truths.

One would have expected some such approach from Mr. Anderson, and certainly there is nothing heroic about his trousers-under-the-togas production. It is a mean, drab, ratty affair, and a rather puzzling one as well, since apart from purging the play of bogus Headmasters' Conference *Romanitas*, it is hard to see exactly what he was after. The piece which he published in *The Times* (December 15th) defending his method suggests that he may not have had much of an idea himself. He has nothing to say about the meaning of the play, but instead issues a general appeal for a fresh, unconventional treatment of Shakespeare. Is Joan Littlewood right (he asks) in her violent attempts to disrupt convention? Does a play like *Julius Cæsar* (he asks) have qualities which can make it "as stimulating for us as a new work by the most brilliant of new dramatists"? The implication is that until Miss Littlewood came along to disrupt us, we were all clinging timidly and piously to a musty, antiquated Shakespeare—as though Shaw hadn't heaved a brick through that particular stained-glass window seventy

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years ago, and as though generations of speculation, scholarship, and debate had produced nothing but bleary-eyed pedantry or mindless eulogies.

THE *Times'* article neatly illustrates a widespread current mood in the theatre. We needn't be as bored stiff as we obviously are with Shakespeare (and he has admittedly been dead for literally *centuries*) once we grasp that he is really our contemporary, our equal, our chum. When Mr. Anderson does get down to detail, it is to justify his extensive cutting and re-editing, especially in the last act. The minor characters who crop up unannounced at Sardis and Philippi, for instance, have been eliminated and replaced by the junior conspirators: the result is greater cohesion, and "more enjoyment for the actors." As long as they're happy; and it isn't the end of the world, either—though it's a pity—if the battle-scenes are somewhat compressed. (Not that Mr. Anderson has altogether earned the right to speak of "Shakespeare's slavish cribbing from Plutarch," since his production doesn't make enough of the presence of Octavius—increasingly addressed as Cæsar—at Philippi: crucial to the working-out of the play, but contrary to the facts in Plutarch, and unslavishly invented by Shakespeare.)

Other bits of pruning in the production are more arguable. The "sauciness" of the comic cobbler at the beginning has a clear dramatic function in establishing an idea of unruliness which can later be drawn on in the great central scenes. But perhaps the most unkindest cut of all occurs in Brutus' orchard, immediately after Lucius has gone out to bring in the conspirators waiting at the door. Nine lines of soliloquy have been chopped off, leaving Brutus with nothing more to say than "This is the faction." According to Mr. Anderson this represents "a clear gain in dramatic tension," since the lines are no more than "embroidery" and "fashionable rhetoric." (Why "fashionable," I wonder?) In fact the lines follow on quite naturally from what Brutus has just been told by Lucius about the appearance of the conspirators, with hats plucked about their ears and faces buried in their cloaks. His question ("Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night/When evils are most free?") revives all his doubts, and sharpens his sense of being trapped in a hideous dream. This is his last moment of irresolution before he steels himself to practise what one half of his mind still regards as treachery. The effect is of someone surrendering to incalculable evil: and if the language is exaggerated ("Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough/To mask thy monstrous visage?") it is because Brutus is not prepared to examine his motives too closely. He has to insist that the plot is foreign to his nature—as indeed in large measure it is. But hovering on the edge of his consciousness is the idea that he may not be as disinterested as he pretends to himself, that he is being led on by ambition as well by concern for the common good. These are the night thoughts of a man who has a smack of Macbeth about him, although the analogy mustn't be pushed too far.

The actual cuts in a Shakespeare production, however, generally matter far less than the spirit in which they are made: a line missing does less damage than a line mishandled. At the end of his article, Mr. Anderson remarks that "there remains the problem of the verse." It *is* a problem, undeniably—almost as much of a problem as the music is in Mozart or the form and colour are in Titian. Mr. Anderson's solution is to cast the play for character: the verse will follow, "not rhetorically, but with the music of intelligence and truth." This is not necessarily the best way of tackling a play which hinges on the use of rhetoric (some of the most powerful rhetoric ever written), and one which deals essentially with public faces, which shows the personal defects of a Cæsar or the private virtues of a Brutus as relatively unimportant beside their ability—or inability—to sustain a role "as our Roman actors do." What the Royal Court production lacks most notably is strength—strength which the verse alone can provide. There is plenty of weakness and folly in the central characters as well. (Shakespeare was writing a serious political parable for an England where the Queen had no heir and Essex was soon to make his last desperate bid, not a picturesque school pageant.) But the failings ought to be allowed to peep out or emerge by themselves, instead of being rushed straight away to the foreground. It is hard to feel much awe at the killing (suitably bloodless) of a Cæsar who, despite Paul Curran's magnificent voice, is closer to a dotard than a demigod; harder still to imagine his spirit ranging for revenge and spreading like fire after his death. One is left making the most of incidental pleasures, such as Sheila Allen's Portia and Jocelyn Herbert's sets, and reflecting on how much of the play—the irresistible swell of individual lines, the quarrel before Philippi—is happily director-proof, actor-proof, all but fool-proof.

THE TIMES don't favour strength of character: we have learned too much about ourselves not to mistrust it. But most of the great tragedies of the past are tragedies of pride, and they lose half their point if *hubris* is presented as mere huff-and-puff. Laurence Olivier's procedure with Solness in the National

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Theatre's *Master Builder* is, needless to say, far more subtle than that. Indeed, his playing is almost too subtle, as though he were ever so slightly toying with the part, taking detached amusement in his own situation. He brings out a vein of insecurity and indecision with all his familiar skill, but what the characterisation gains in irony it loses in ruthlessness. Both vitality and destructiveness are held in self-conscious check, so that Solness' treatment of Ragnar, his attempt to block the path of the younger generation, comes across as a piece of meanness rather than a piece of madness, and with Kaja he looks more like a boss taking advantage of his secretary than a mesmerist. A socially plausible Solness would have to be more of the inner-directed ironclad than this to be compatible with the heaven-storming Promethean of the climax.

Not that anyone would want to present the drama of Solness in exclusively social terms. By the last act he belongs with Brand, Faust, Icarus: "people don't do such things," but mythical heroes do. *The Master Builder* has been variously seen as an allegory of Ibsen's own career, a study of the superman, a sexual fantasy. All these readings are possible, none of them exhaustive. The play goes back to Ibsen's "first conscious and permanent impression": being taken up the tower opposite his home by his nurse, looking down on the street below, and hearing his mother shriek and faint as she spotted him on the ledge. Perhaps in the end it is about the indiscretion of ever having been born at all, the presumption of growing up into that proud and wretched thing, a man.

Much of this Olivier conveys, and it would be carping to complain about a performance which for most of the way is highly effective. But he is at his best when he is being drawn into the net: the prey circles the huntress, the hypnotist is hypnotised himself. In the climb and the crash at the end, by contrast, there is something lacking, and it is too late to start turning Solness into a Titan. Joan Plowright scores an unqualified triumph as Hilda, on the other hand, all the more impressive in that she doesn't look the part. But her grip never relaxes: she fascinates and strikes fear. The triumph of her daemon is as terrible as that of Laura in *The Father*—more terrible, indeed, since it is innocent. Her strength is that as yet she is driven only by her claims on life: life has still to make its claims on her. Nothing else in the production touches this performance, but the acting is generally of a high level, and Celia Johnson deserves particular praise for her portrayal of a thoroughly washed-out Aline.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Namier & His Critics

BERNARD LEVIN's recent characterisation of Sir Lewis Namier as one "who knew more and understood less than any other historian who ever lived" (*Daily Mail*) is the latest though perhaps not the most profound criticism of Namier's work. It came shortly after the publication of Namier's *chef d'oeuvre, The House of Commons, 1754–1790*, the first instalment of the officially sponsored *History of Parliament*, to which he devoted the last nine years of his life. It marks the lowest point yet reached of Namier's reputation, a reputation which after having grown steadily for over twenty years began to take a turn downhill in the late 1950s.

In 1929, when Namier published *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, he was of little account among professional historians and hardly known to a wider public. When the second edition appeared in 1957, a legend had already begun to grow about him and the word "Namierism" had been coined to describe his method and technique of writing history. It was said that he had revolutionised the interpretation of eighteenth-century politics; that his influence had permeated several other fields of historical writing; that he was in his chosen sphere almost omniscient and infallible; and that he had gathered round him a group of younger scholars, imbued with the desire to follow in the master's footsteps and contemptuous of all who did not worship at his shrine.

It is difficult to account for the growth of Namierolatry. Namier never wrote for a mass audience and was quite incapable of popularising his ideas. He rarely spoke on the radio and never appeared on television. His lectures were nearly all delivered to academic audiences. The sale of his books was comparatively small, and for twelve years after the war he allowed *The Structure of Politics* to remain out of print. No book by Namier appeared in a paperback edition during his lifetime. Even in intellectual circles it is probable that Namier is better known at second hand than in the original; and with the exception of Marx it is difficult to think of another writer who is so much talked about today and so little read. It was only in 1956, when I published *The Chatham Administration*, that anything like a "Namier school" began to emerge.

The first serious criticism of Namier's work appeared in 1957 when Professor Herbert Butterfield published an article in ENCOUNTER on "George III and the Namier School." This was followed by his book *George III and the Historians*, and a further article in *History*, "George III and the Constitution", the whole forming a formidable corpus of criticism. All that need be said of this criticism here is that it was such as any scholar must expect to face: reasonable and not unmixed with high praise, temperate in tone and void of personal feeling. It was concerned only with Namier's work on British history, but affected by implication his work in other fields.

The Butterfield critique was on the whole well received. Professor David Thomson, Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, and Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper all thought that what Professor Butterfield said had long needed saying. There followed a number of minor critics, who ransacked Namier's books for conclusions of doubtful validity and wrote articles to show how wrong Namier had been (not always with the courtesy and respect shown by Professor Butterfield). The Namier revolution had been met by the Butterfield reaction, and Namier's reputation for infallibility had been destroyed. He had become fair game at which young historians could practise their aim.

Namier did not attempt to refute Professor Butterfield's criticism, and his sole reply to his adversaries was that his volumes in the *History of Parliament* would be the best justification of his work. He died in 1960 with these volumes unfinished, and it was left to me to complete them and write the introductory survey —planned as the consummation of Namier's eighteenth-century studies. With the publication this autumn of Namier's biography of Charles Townshend, the corpus is at an end. It remains a mere fragment of what Namier intended to write. But there are no disciples prepared to carry on the work.

OF ALL Namier's critics Professor Butterfield was the best informed and the most scholarly. He disagreed with Namier's account of events at the beginning of George III's reign, with his interpretation of eighteenth-century politics and in particular the growth of party, and with other aspects of Namier's work of interest chiefly to those who have studied the period. Mr. Taylor, who has not, was impatient with all this pother about events which did not really interest him, and criticised Namier on more general grounds. But when we come to Namier's latest critics, it is not easy to see what they are criticising. Do Mr. Levin or Mr. John Marullus really care a straw as to whether Namier or Butterfield is right about George III? It is difficult to think

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that they do, or that the *Daily Mail* would be prepared to give Mr. Levin half a column if that were the sole point of dispute. In fact the grounds on which Professor Butterfield originally criticised Namier have been largely forgotten, and the attack now is on a broad front. Namier is accused of having perverted historical scholarship, of having bamboozled Parliament into voting public money for a history of Parliament which nobody wants to read, and of having corrupted a whole generation of historians. Like another Socrates, he neglected the god of history and introduced novel practices into the worship of Clio.

Much of this was implicit in Professor Butterfield's original criticism. For him the "Namier school" was "the most powerful organised squadron in our historical world", concerned to propagate the ideas of the master, contemptuous of other historians, and so formidable as to threaten "to check the free play of criticism." I confess I was taken aback by the melodramatic overtone to Professor Butterfield's preface. For there never was a "Namier school" as he described it. Of the three historians whom he joined with Namier in his criticism, Mr. Sedgwick, though a close friend of Namier, could hardly be described as his disciple; and the rank and file members of this powerful organised squadron who threatened the free play of historical criticism were reduced to Dr. Owen and myself.

In the two years following the publication of my book *The Chatham Administration* it was criticised by Professor Butterfield in four separate publications. I can think of no young historian publishing a first book who has had to face such repeated criticism from so distinguished a scholar, and I cannot flatter myself that this was provoked solely by my own errors and omissions. Namier was the real target: he was the heresiarch and I was only the chief disciple. Professor Butterfield set out to burn us at the intellectual stake, without passion or ill-feeling, solely for the good of our souls and to prevent future historians from being contaminated. And Namier's heresy was more than a mistaken interpretation of eighteenth-century history, otherwise it would not have interested Mr. Taylor or spurred on Messrs. Levin and Marullus to cast their faggots on the fire. It was a heresy which went deep and threatened every field of historical writing. Indeed, it struck at the basis of intellectual life, at least as far as the humanities were concerned. Thinking as he did, Professor Butterfield was right to lead a crusade against it, though he greatly over-estimated the strength and coherence of the heretics. What was the Namier heresy and why was it so important to scotch it?

SUPERFICIALLY, Namier seemed a pillar of the academic establishment. He was an emeritus professor of Manchester University, an honorary fellow of Balliol, a fellow of the British Academy, and had been knighted for his services to historical research. The originator of this new heresy was no obscure monk like Martin Luther but one of the princes of the church. "Formidable", "massive", "Olympian", were the epithets used by reviewers to describe his work. One can sympathise with the Jack-the-giant-killer feeling which must have agitated Professor Butterfield when he set out to cast his stone at this intellectual colossus. But the popular image of Namier, as is often the case, disguised the real man. He had creative originality to a high degree, but behind it were doubts and hesitations. The depth and intensity of his researches, which Professor Butterfield saw as one of his strongest points, were prompted by the need to prove his thesis beyond all possible doubt. He would devote an immense amount of time and energy to the establishment of some small point, immaterial to his main argument; and his books are spoiled for the general reader by the enormous mass of footnotes which he felt necessary to justify his text. Mr. Taylor believes that Namier had studied the Duke of Newcastle (who wasted his life in trifles) until he was in danger of becoming like him. There was more than a superficial resemblance between Namier and Newcastle, but Namier was redeemed by his creative imagination, and his neurosis, largely overcome in his personal life, was traceable only in his books.

There was an emotional reaction, apparent beneath the surface of Namier's work, which developed into the Namier heresy. Professor Butterfield writes in *George III and the Historians* that "if we carry the idea of Sir Lewis Namier to an extreme, it is difficult to see why the study of history... should be considered an important matter for anybody." And at the end of his book he says that Namier's method is in danger of reducing history into "a tale told by an idiot." *Rem acu tetigisti!* Namier himself said something to the same effect in 1944, in a passage almost certainly unknown to Professor Butterfield.

"Shall we get any nearer to explaining the senseless irrelevancy of so-called human thought and action?" he wrote in answer to a question about the possibility of writing an impartial history of the second World War. "Behind your question seems to lurk a very justifiable doubt... whether we shall ever know anything which is worth knowing." This doubt lies at the basis of all Namier's work. It is the real heresy against which his critics contend. If carried to its ultimate conclusion (which Namier never did) it

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would paralyse all human thought and action. This was the fundamental reason (there were others) why he never continued *England in the Age of the American Revolution*. It led him to abandon history for biography, and to try to fashion an instrument of research which would incorporate the results of analogous disciplines.

The belief in the essential rationality of man is the last illusion to which we still cling. We cling to it like the man in the story Namier was fond of telling, who sold anti-earthquake pills because there was nothing else to put in their place. Without it there would be little point in writing history, and it was because Namier feared there might be little point in writing history as it had hitherto been written that his critics attacked him. If man is a creature say only ten per cent rational, we might learn more by studying biography (provided there is sufficient material about the subject's formative years), or a history illumined by psychology and the social sciences. But Namier saw little future for the type of history his critics were writing. His conclusion is one that almost every historian feels bound to resist. But as he looked on the world in the last years of his life Namier felt more and more that he was right. And what has happened since his death would have strengthened his belief.

John Brooke

International Commentary

The Soviet Dream of Africa

By Leonard Schapiro

AFRICA means little in Russian tradition. Except for a short adventure in Abyssinia in 1888, there has, until quite recently, been little contact between Russia and Africa. There is little reference to Africa in Russian literature—Peter the Great's Moor (Pushkin's ancestor, whom the poet described in an unfinished story) is not portrayed as an African but as a slightly eccentric Frenchman, much as Othello (*pace* Sir Laurence) is an exotic Venetian or Elizabethan. There is certainly in Russian life none of the popular mythology of Africa with which we grew up in this country long before new African states impinged on our consciousness—nothing like Stanley and Livingstone, Rider Haggard and the Zulu War, Leon Underwood, and the whole amalgam of guilt, affection, protectiveness, resentment, in our consciousness which makes indifference to Africa and Africans impossible for an Englishman or a Frenchman. The modern Soviet Russian has met the African in recent years only under the full blast of party propaganda, which is not a good introduction to one's fellow human beings at the best of times. It is small wonder that the encounter between the two races at the human level has not always been an unqualified success.

The party, however, is deeply preoccupied with Africa. African studies in the U.S.S.R. have been making great strides in recent years —as Mr. Morison has so admirably described in his recent little book.[1] Soviet interest in Africa has also, naturally enough, been followed with attention by scholars outside the U.S.S.R. The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies at Uppsala, for example, has devoted a conference to the whole subject[2] and Professor Brzezinski has edited a volume of first-class studies on Communist policy in Africa.[3] All this is very welcome. With something that looks like an African Cuba developing in Tanzania, it is important to assess the strength and potentialities of the Soviet effort to win Africa over to the "Socialist camp."

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[1] David Morison, *The U.S.S.R. and Africa* (Oxford University Press).

[2] *The Soviet Bloc, China and Africa* (Uppsala).

[3] Z. Brzezinski (editor), *Africa and The Communist World* (Stanford and Oxford University Press).

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THERE IS NO DOUBT about the effort. The dream of a Communist Africa goes back to Lenin, of course. But for Lenin Africa was merely an undifferentiated part of the general mass of colonial territories, which, in the indeterminate future, would rise against their capitalist exploiters and deal the death blow to imperialism. The present Soviet Communist interest in Africa is both more modest and more concrete; it is also much more intense than would have been conceivable in Lenin's day. Soviet interest in Africa is more modest in the sense that no sane Soviet Communist can any longer believe that a pro-Soviet Communist rising in Africa is imminent. This more sober outlook is due not only to the fact that the colonial powers have for the most part encouraged the emergence of African independence. It is also due to a recognition (if somewhat hesitant and belated) on the Soviet side that the present force predominating in Africa is *nationalism*, and while in the long-term view the Soviet leaders hope that this will not preclude the transition to Soviet-type Communism, no one knows better than they that in the short term the two are incompatible.

Soviet African policy has also become more concrete. The Russians are learning more to temper their dogmatic overall policy to the conditions of individual countries, and above all are coming into economic contact with them on an increasingly significant scale. What one is above all conscious of in Soviet propaganda about Africa is the intensity with which it is pursued, and it is easy to see why. The record of Communist rule is such that it must increasingly seek to justify itself and to assert its legitimacy by reference to the future—both the glorious future of materialist heaven-on-earth which the "Communist" phase will bring when once the "Socialist" phase has been transcended; and the eschatological historical Future (which once so captivated Lincoln Steffens) towards which we are all ineluctably moving, whether we like it or not. For the Russian Communist this Future can only mean the kind of régime that most closely resembles his own and will indeed quite naturally look to the U.S.S.R. as the elder brother who got there first and then held out a helping hand. That is why Soviet publicists can get quite extraordinarily angry at any suggestion that there might be some "African way to Socialism" different from (and by implication better than) the Soviet form. Yuri Zhukov (not the most subtle of agit-prop spokesmen) recently attributed all suggestions that there might be such systems as "African" or "Arabian" or "Islamic" Socialism to "neo-colonialist propaganda."[4] But the sad fact remains, to which Soviet Africanists will increasingly have to accommodate themselves, that this is precisely what many Africans seem to believe.

NEVERTHELESS, there are certain strong advantages with which the Soviet Communist starts when he sets out to convert the African. First of all, although strictly speaking Russia is one of the great colonialist powers, she has never colonised Africa. By one of those illogical conventions of current political mythology (which incidentally also applies to the United States), colonisation on the land continent does *not* count as colonisation. Secondly, the atrocious inhumanities of which Communist régimes have been guilty seem to shock some Africans much less than some Europeans—not, I suspect, because Africans are indifferent to such conduct, but because they have not themselves always experienced the best sides of the much-vaunted European rule of law. Besides, they are not necessarily fully aware of Communist misdeeds, since Communist propaganda is naturally more widespread and intensive in Africa than any counter-propaganda. This general ignorance of Communism in practice provides the Soviet Union with two further initial advantages. The African is perhaps as a result of inexperience more ready to succumb to Soviet covert activity—though it must not be forgotten that several African states (Guinea and Congo, for example) have shown themselves pretty resolute in reacting against Soviet subversive machinations. Lastly, it would be idle to deny that Communism offers certain strong attractions to the new African intelligentsia: an ideology, which, true or false, provides a valuable stimulus for dealing with the problems raised by the aim of achieving rapid development where conditions are ill-adapted to it; and the general aura of secular progressiveness and modernity, which Communism (however untruthfully) manages to assume in projecting itself to them. Hitherto, for the most part, the Africans seem to have maintained the position that they are very ready to accept material aid from the Soviet Union, but are prepared neither to accept Soviet *theories* nor to tolerate Soviet *interference*. The gamble inherent in Soviet economic policy towards Africa must be that this will not always be so. Indeed (especially now that their policy is under fire from the Chinese) the Soviet leaders are always assuring themselves that in casting their bread upon the waters of nationalist non-Communist African

[4] In a review in *Pravda* (May 19th) of a recently published symposium on Africa by a group of leading Soviet journalists from Adzubei downwards, of which 100,000 copies have been printed.

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régimes, they are preparing the way for ultimate "Socialist" victories.

THE DECISION TO SUPPORT the new nationalist African régimes was not an easy one and is of comparatively recent date. The traditional view was that the new African nationalist leaders were "running dogs of imperialism" and that the Soviet Union should only support Communist parties. This was based on the strict theory that Socialism can everywhere develop only along the lines of the class struggle, and that the party of the future victorious class, the proletariat, can only be the Communist Party. As Professor Alexander Dallin puts it, the new view meant abandoning the maximum strategy of control over the African continent (at any rate temporarily) in favour of more modest future objectives: depriving the United States and its allies of political and strategic bases in Africa and encouraging the emergence of neutral states which will adopt policies "more distinctly identified with those of the U.S.S.R."[5]

What of the longer-term aims? The "non-capitalist" way is by definition not "Socialist" (*i.e.*, Communist Party controlled) but, given certain conditions, it is regarded by Soviet theorists as likely to transform itself into "Socialism." These conditions were first formulated in December 1960 as the essential characteristics of an "independent national democracy": a state which upholds its political and economic independence; which fights against imperialism, neo-colonialism, and the penetration of imperialist capital; rejects dictatorial or despotic methods of government; assures its population broad democratic rights and freedoms; and assures it the opportunity to work for the enactment of agrarian reforms and other social and democratic changes.

Translated into practical politics this has in fact meant that the Soviet Union has shown a strong preference for the more dictatorial new African states with markedly "progressive" inclinations. Soviet commentators on Africa have evolved a classification of African states in order of revolutionary merit: Ghana, Guinea, and Mali top the list. South Africa is at the bottom. Bottom but one are those states which incline to the "bourgeois democratic" model, *e.g.*, Nigeria and Tanganyika.

I suppose the more cynical might say that the classification is simple enough, in the sense that those states which are more likely to toe the Soviet lines are preferred to those less likely to do so. This is perhaps an over-simplification—Guinea, for example, has shown considerable independence and spirit in its relations with the Soviet Union, and even Ghana is not a Soviet satellite. The leading Soviet Africanist, Professor Potekhin, has several reproaches to make in his book *Ghana Today*: above all, the predominance of the English language and the survival of British institutions.[6] He claimed to have had a colossal success with his lectures there, but, as the late Walter Kolarz recalls (in his book on *Communism & Colonialism*): "Unfortunately the first question to be asked by a member of the public (in Accra) concerned the awkward problem of forced labour in the Soviet Union...." It may be, too, that I underestimate the importance, in explaining this classification, of the ideological acrobatics in which Soviet Africanists have been indulging in the past few years in an endeavour to apply Marxist criteria which are not remotely applicable to Africa. However, what it all amounts to in terms of practical politics is that the Soviet Union likes left-wing dictatorships and dislikes those countries in which stable democratic institutions have a chance of taking root. This, from the Soviet point of view, is sound sense. The more dictatorial the régime, the more likely it is to alienate the Western powers and to lean on the U.S.S.R. Its leaders, having no public opinion to reckon with, can more readily be won over to the Soviet side in return for Soviet bolstering; and even if overthrown are more likely to be replaced by another dictatorship. In a relatively stable and democratic régime the chances of an ultimate Soviet take-over are naturally smaller.

THE SOVIET EFFORT in Africa, which in terms of economic aid, propaganda, educational training and, no doubt, subversion where oportunity offers, is becoming very considerable, and will continue to increase. This investment of energy and capital in countries in which no ready instrument of control in the form of a Communist party as yet exists can only be regarded as a gamble by the Soviet Union. Most of the Western literature on the subject to which I have referred is concerned with trying to assess whether the gamble is likely to come off; on the whole, most of the experts seem to express moderate optimism. Certainly, if ultimate success is to be judged by the extent of success to date, there is little ground for undue fear of Soviet Communism winning over Africa in the near future. The ultimate answer will probably

[5] Cf. *The World Marxist Review* for April 1963: "The non-capitalist way (in Africa) will make for a more dynamic neutralist policy, will help strengthen its anti-imperialist basis and bring this policy closer to that of the Socialist camp."

[6] Ghana, however, has more recently had a pat on the back from *Pravda* for kicking out the "venal, rotten, and bureaucratic" administration set up by the British.

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depend much more on Africa than on the Soviet Union. Or perhaps on China.

I venture to put forward two reasons why one should be on the side of the optimists. The first is an economic paradox. Both the "imperialists" and the Communists are pouring economic aid into the new African states, each side hoping thereby to preserve the new states from falling into the opposite "camp." The Africans, quite naturally, are happy to enjoy the benefits of this, for them, lucrative competition. The "capitalist" West, with something of a Marxist determinism, seems to believe that economic development will lead to modernisation, prosperity, and stability, and that this in turn will lead to the relaxation of anti-Western tensions and to a lessening of dictatorial tendencies. The Soviet Communists (who are, of course, not Marxists) believe that their aid will ultimately so impress the élite dictatorships in whom they put their trust, that they will be won over completely to the Soviet side. In this contest of views both experience and probability seem to support the Western view.

The second reason for moderate optimism may lie in the total misappreciation on the Soviet side of African problems and African psychology. It is not for me, who have no knowledge of Africa, to generalise about Africa and the African outlook. But even the most superficial acquaintance with African society suggests that those old-fashioned 19th-century Marxist platitudes about "class" and "feudalism," to which Soviet Africanists are committed, are as little applicable to Africa as to the moon. (I recall a seminar of mine at which a distinguished Western expert on Soviet African studies read a paper about them in the presence of a distinguished English social anthropologist specialising on Africa—with the result that the anthropologist had to be almost forcibly restrained from voicing strong intellectual indignation.)

Above all, the Soviet Communists seem to lack imaginative understanding of the feelings which predominate in the new African states. These states are, naturally enough, preoccupied with the development of their own national consciousness and personality. They seem genuinely anxious to avoid involvement in a conflict between "East" and "West" from which, rightly or wrongly, they believe they can stand apart. They are genuinely and healthily indifferent to conflicts of ideologies which they regard as alien, absurd, and unreal: a number of African leaders have already publicly expressed their disgust at the rifts in the Communist front organisations, produced by the Sino-Soviet conflict, in which they have been invited to take sides.[7]

Incidentally, this African indifference to ideology may to some extent offset the disorganising effect of the Sino-Soviet split on Communist activities in Africa. Propaganda and subversion by both powers have to be reduced to their lowest practical level, with the result that combined activities may in fact be strengthened by healthy competition, rather than the reverse.

This seems to be the position both in Tanzania and in the Congo at any rate. One would have thought that it was obvious that China stands to gain more than the Soviet Union from continuing chaos in the Congo—if there is to be a Communist take-over there in the end it will be the Chinese who are the most likely to do the taking. This does not prevent the Soviet Union from pouring arms into the rebel areas. What is more alarming is that this policy has continued since the fall of Khrushchev, who was always sensitive to the point of folly about his "revolutionary image." Evidently the new men have not yet faced the realities presented by the split with China in terms of their African policy. They may yet do so, but the first signs are not encouraging.

The best, if shortest, analysis of Soviet policy towards Africa seems to me to be that of the late Walter Kolarz in the collection of his broadcasts published posthumously.[8] (I am confirmed in this view by the virulence with which these essays and the author were recently attacked by one of our own domestic anonymous weekly agit-prop reviewers.) Kolarz knew not only the Soviet side, but had travelled extensively in Africa. He also had the perception to see that ultimately all political problems are moral problems. He discerned several weaknesses in Soviet policy towards Africa—the jejune theoretical strait-jacket for example, and its inadequacy when it comes to dealing with ethnic and race problems. He also saw the fundamental inconsistency between the Communists' vocal support for "national self-determination" outside their own boundaries and their persistent refusal to concede it to the ethnic groups within them. But he saw the overriding weakness of Soviet nation-

[7] A Kenya delegate at last year's Algiers meeting of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation commented:

"We are not Marxist-Leninists. Most of us have not read a line of *Das Kapital*. What interest do you expect us to show in your doctrinal quarrels? I am tired of being asked what I think of the Soviet position when I am eating a sandwich, and what I think of the Chinese argument when I am drinking my coffee. . . ." *Le Monde*, 28 March, 1964.

[8] *Communism & Colonialism* (Macmillan).

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alities policy in the fact that "in their attitude towards ethnic problems the Communists have not been guided by objective considerations and by a search for a just solution, but by the interests of the Soviet Union."

Who whom? Or, to paraphrase Lenin's elegant epigram, will the Soviet Communists befuddle the Africans with their double-talk? Or will the Africans, by refusing to be taken in and to risk their hard-won independence, teach the Communists a new lesson—that there are limits to hypocrisy, even in foreign policy?

Are Opinion Polls Adequate?

By H. J. Eysenck

A FEW MONTHS before the election I pointed out in a letter to *The Times* that the continued failure of the two main opinion polls in this country to agree in their forecasts raised some important problems. During a discussion on the B.B.C.'s *Panorama* programme the Director of one of these polls suggested rather unkindly that I seemed to be "the only person" who felt worried on this account; the fact that shortly afterwards he put a notice in the paper which prints the results of his poll, saying that because of widespread disturbance caused by the disagreement between polls he was willing to have anyone inspect the books, seems to suggest that perhaps I was not in a minority of one. What then are the things which appear so worrying?

1. The first point of course is the actual disparity and disagreement. It has been as high as 9% at times and then settled down to around 5 or 6%, until it vanished on the last pre-election poll. The pollsters have suggested that this is simply due to the chance errors attaching to all measurement; but this is a disingenuous answer. In the first place, the errors were higher than would be expected on a chance basis, and secondly they were always in the same direction, which rules out an appeal to chance. In any case one might say that if chance errors were as large as this the polls would be quite useless, as differences between the parties are seldom larger than these alleged chance errors. This seems to me a situation which must bring scientific attitude-measurement into disrepute.

2. My second worry is the complacency and lack of progressiveness shown by the polling organisations. The accuracy of their forecasts does not seem to have improved very much in the last 30 years and this seems to me a severe condemnation of the methods used. Why has there been so little research into the many factors which American work has suggested as crucial in improving accuracy? The polls often claim that they are carrying on a "great deal of research" but not much of this ever seems to get published in academic journals, and there is no basis therefore for evaluating it. From what is known about the divergent results of the polls one can only conclude that a considerable shake-up seems to be necessary in order to bring their methods up-to-date.

3. This suggests to me forcibly that the polls have been rather parasitic as far as academic psychology and sociology are concerned. Having taken over the methods and statistical techniques of these disciplines they have never repaid their debt by refunnelling information into these disciplines, except on very rare occasions. Where there should be an active interplay of research and information gathering between academic bodies and commercial polling organisations there has been an almost complete lack of interaction. In part no doubt the academicians themselves are to blame for their stand-offishness but in large part, I think, the polls are responsible for this failure of interaction. They had the facilities for conducting research into many important questions of interest to social scientists everywhere, of writing up their results and publishing them in the appropriate journals. Why have they never made proper use of these facilities?

4. Another worry centres around the public image of social science which is presented to thinking people everywhere by the pollsters. Their apparent lack of competence, shown by their failure to agree and also by their failure to agree that this disagreement is serious from a scientific point of view, must make people worry about the science they claim to represent. This, however, is not all. The exaggerated simplicity of the questions asked and the results reported is an insult to the complexity of the field of social attitude-measurement and offends people whose minds can comprehend more than a single percentage figure pro or con the government. The polls may claim that nothing more is called for by the popular newspapers which print their results, but have they, in fact, ever

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tried a more complex approach, and if so where have the results been published? I feel sure that many readers would be interested to know for instance what the characteristics and personality traits were of the so-called "floating voter," of the non-voter, or the working-class Conservative. Why aren't the polls giving us information on these points in addition to their simple percentages? The public hardly realises that questions of this type are capable of a scientific answer because their horizon is limited by simple yes-and-no answers arranged on a percentage basis. This is not the picture of social science which I would like the general public to have, and I am afraid the polls are responsible for it.

5. Another worry is of a more practical account. There is suspicion of the existence of what is called a "band-wagon" effect, *i.e.*, a tendency for people to vote for and affiliate to the winners or those who look like being the winners. With errors as large as those disclosed in the disagreement between the polls it is quite possible that a "band-wagon" effect may be set up by polling results which in effect favour the weaker party. In this way polling forecasts may act so as to make themselves come true, as it were, by making people fall in line with the actual forecast. In the *Panorama* interview Dr. Durant said he had never observed such an effect, but one is forced to ask just how closely he has looked, and how adequate his methods were. To make an appropriate judgment one would require the results to be published in the usual scientific journals in sufficient detail; until this is done the supposition must remain that possibly the failure to find the effect was due more to the faults in the method of looking for it than in its actual absence. Dr. Durant may of course be right, but there is enough indirect evidence to make one rather suspicious that he may only be whistling to keep up his courage.

THE TWO POLLS rely on rather different methods of sampling, Gallup concentrating on "quota sampling," N.O.P. on some form of "area sampling." (Gallup also claims that he sometimes uses area sampling although relying mostly on the use of a quota.) There should be by now a considerable amount of very interesting data on the comparison of these two methods, publication of which would greatly assist other social scientists concerned with sampling problems. The data might also throw some light on the discrepancies between the polls which have sometimes been suggested by the protagonists to be due to such factors as interviewers approaching "erroneously chosen representatives" of given quota categories, or certain types of people being "less likely to be at home" for interviewing at certain times. Why, with all this wealth of information available, are comparative results not being published? Why do we still have to argue about these questions which after all are purely empirical ones, in terms of surmise and hypotheses? Why all this discrepancy? Both polls have indeed invited serious students to "come and visit" them, but this is not a feasible or reasonable method for obtaining information of the kind required. It is certainly not usual in scientific circles to ask people to drop round, have a look at the files, and talk to one or two persons. The usual process is to carry out the necessary work and computations, write it up in an appropriate form, and publish it either as an article or as a book. This is the only way of making scientific knowledge properly available, and it is difficult to see why the polls should not avail themselves of this additional method.

In any case, casual visits could hardly help one in relation to another problem which is also worrying and that is the selection and training of interviewers. It is known from American work that interviewees tend to give different answers to different interviewers in accordance with their interpretation of what it is that might please the interviewer. Thus, working-class interviewers are likely to get more replies favouring Labour, middle-class interviewers to get replies favouring the Conservatives. Special training may lessen this effect but cannot obviate it. Similarly the opinions of the interviewers themselves, *i.e.* those actually held and not assumed to be held by them because of their class membership, are also known to influence interviewees' responses. What have the major polls done to measure and/or correct for errors due to these factors? Possibly what they have done is unexceptionable, but one would like to be reassured by the publication of detailed statistics of experiments carried out on this particular point. No simple visit or talk to some of the directors would be adequate for the purpose. What is required is a definite experiment, properly set up, carried out and analysed according to the best available methodological procedures. All this kind of thing *has* been done in the United States. Why is it not done here?

I SUGGESTED that one way of overcoming many of these difficulties and of reintegrating opinion polling and social science was the setting up of an independent organisation, the governing body of which was made up of experienced psychologists, sociologists, statisticians, *et al.*, who had worked in this general area. By "independent" in this connection I meant simply that the organisation should not depend on a particular journal or publisher or firm and

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should not be forced to concentrate entirely on the provision of data collected with a view to being acceptable to that journal or firm. The orientation of such an Institute should be towards scientific research and its responsibility should be to the advancement of knowledge and methods in the field of social science and opinion measurement. The precise details of the setting up of such an organisation are probably of little importance and, in any case, I cannot claim any special competence in that field. What I think is definitely undesirable is that things should be allowed to go on as they are. The present position is unsatisfactory for the reasons given and if it continues can only lead to a lowering of the esteem in which social science is held by the majority of people.

Competition may be the essence of the Boat Race or a football match, but in the measurement of attitudes such competition has a place only if the aim is that of improving methods and results. In the recent past the competition between different polling organisations has had no result but the provision of evidence of their failure to achieve a reasonable level of reliability in their estimates. This is true of the opinion-polling bodies, and it is even more true of the organisations established to estimate the number of viewers for competing television stations, or for different organisations concerned with market research. All of these claim to be scientific, but none of them provides us with the requisite evidence enabling us to accept these claims.

Sartre & the Prize

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE had good reasons not to take the Nobel Prize. One was inherent in the image of himself he has constructed—that of the anti-philosophical philosopher, the anti-literary literary man. He regards the realm of words (see his autobiography) as an empty nightmare; the same source tells us that he is a man with no ties to himself and no ties to an environment in which the current position of the writer is morally false and socially equivocal. Having put all this on the record, how could he have circulated wreathed in the Nobel laurels without feeling ridiculous?

And if this were not deterrent enough, there was the chance remark he let slip in 1957, when he heard that Albert Camus had got the Nobel Prize. *"C'est bien fait pour lui!"* "It was made for him!" If the prize was tailored for the Camus of 1957—the Camus Sartre suspected of having sold out to respectable society—how would it sit on Sartre, who even to-day panics at the very thought of being praised in *Figaro*?

Still, accidents happen. Undeniably, Sartre wanted to be a writer, and wanting that, he wanted fame: the more the better, naturally. In time, he got his wish, for real merits, and when his reputation was solidly established, he duly got the Nobel Prize. He could have accepted this as an occupational hazard or even as a punishment coming to him for the mere fact of wanting to be a writer in a society he calls "bourgeois." He might have argued (and here many people would agree with him) that in this society, where all values are false, fame is false too, and that a desire for success is simply a pursuit of the false, even if you are a writer and engaged in what purports to be the freest and most honest of all occupations.

If Sartre had kept the Nobel Prize, possibly muttering to himself "It was made for me!" nobody would have reproached him, especially since he could not be suspected of having manoeuvred to get it. All he managed to achieve by turning it down was to add to the renown and publicity surrounding the prize the renown and publicity of refusing it. And the more he went on explaining his refusal, the less convincing his reasons appeared. Indeed, they disappeared, and what was left was a gesture signifying just this: the name of Jean-Paul Sartre was quite big enough without the addition of "Nobel Prize-winner." The gesture, unfortunately, is in the style of someone Sartre hates more, almost, than anybody living and with the most justification: General de Gaulle.

No, Sartre's reasons for turning down the prize are not convincing. A writer, he says, when he takes political, social, and literary stands, must not resort to extra-literary means. He must stick to the written word. Sartre goes on to express the fear that his readers might be exposed to "a pressure I consider undesirable" by the Nobel accolade, because "if I sign myself *Jean-Paul Sartre*, it is not the same as signing *Jean-Paul Sartre, Nobel prize-winner*." This is so much hollow casuistry. It is simply untrue that the Nobel award exerts undue pressure on the reader. At most, it sells books, but no wide-awake reader is coerced by the prize into forming a favourable opinion of the book he has bought. He is free to judge for himself. Otherwise, you would have to say that the very name of a celebrated writer, the fact that he is a celebrity, exerts much more undue pressure on

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the public than the Stockholm jury. Sartre might well ask himself how many readers he has who have read his works through with attention from no other motive than to learn what he has to say on important and difficult subjects and have judged him solely on that basis. Do they outnumber the "readers" who have bought his books and leafed through them because he is a celebrity? Let us grant that it is not his fault if he has "caused talk" for reasons that have little or nothing to do with the meaning of his actual writings.

And what does that other statement of his mean—the one that has been staring out in headlines and that at first glance seemed true? "The writer should not allow himself to be turned into an institution."

Its meaning is zero. Nobody can turn a writer into an institution, *i.e.*, into a pompous mummy —nobody but the writer himself. Is there any instance of the Nobel Prize turning anybody into an institution? Has any author been measurably shrunk or enlarged by it?

SARTRE'S POLITICAL arguments, as might be expected, are even feebler, *e.g.*, "The only battle that can be fought on the cultural front to-day is for peaceful co-existence between the two cultures—East and West." Since this is the battle to which Sartre feels committed, he "cannot accept any honours from cultural bodies in either camp—neither West nor East."

Here, as usual when Sartre adopts a political posture, we are in the field not so much of the false as of the arbitrary and non-existent. He needs to be told that the distinction between a culture of the East and a culture of the West exists only in his own mind and in the state ideology of the Soviet Union. No genuine representative of Western culture subscribes to such an idea, and the same goes, one hopes, for the East. He pictures himself in the role of mediator between the two cultures, but it is a mystery how he plans to carry out his mission: is he perhaps going to act as mediator between the Soviet Writers' Union and its Western analogues? In that case, clearly, isn't the committed writer obliged to work through institutions, congresses, meetings, public addresses, rather than through the written word? And what kind of result, exactly, does the committed writer expect to achieve from these ceremonial encounters? But take the assumption that such meetings can be productive. You would think then that the Nobel Prize and the Lenin Prize would come in handy, and it would come in handy, too, for the writer to consent to be turned into an institution. In assemblies of this kind, with official aims, titles and honours really count for something, and the perfect intermediary would be one who made his appearance with the Nobel and the Lenin laurels intertwined on his brow.

STILL WORSE FOLLOWS when Sartre ventures to claim that "in the current situation, the Nobel Prize shows itself objectively to be an honour reserved for Western literary men and Soviet rebels." The proof, he says, is that neither Pablo Neruda nor Louis Aragon has had the prize. On the other side of the fence, sad to say, Boris Pasternak got it instead of Mikhail Sholokov.

Thus, according to Sartre, the criterion of the Stockholm Academy ought to be political, not literary. But then he voices the suspicion that the reason Pablo Neruda and Louis Aragon have failed to get it is that they are Communists and not that their works do not deserve it. Therefore the prize should be assigned on purely literary grounds. Yet in the next breath Sartre contends that Sholokov should have had it instead of Pasternak because Sholokov was a writer who was highly acceptable to the Soviet hierarchy, while Pasternak was a "rebel." So we are back with the notion that the award should be political, since it would be insulting to Jean-Paul Sartre to suppose that he thinks

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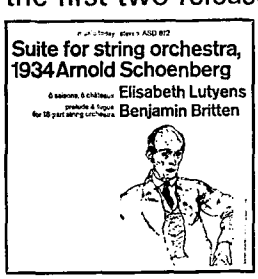
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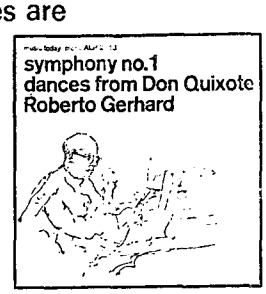

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Pasternak's work was unworthy of the Nobel Prize.

It is not surprising that a chain of logic of this kind should lead Sartre finally to the point of insinuating that the Swedish Academy did not give him the prize during the Algerian War, so as not to compromise itself politically by crowning, in his person, the defender of Algerian freedom. Instead they are giving it to him now, "when the hostilities are over." Now they run no risk in recognising a general "spirit of freedom" in his work, a spirit he cannot make head or tail of since the only freedom that interests him is "a more concrete freedom, which consists in the right to have more than one pair of shoes and enough to eat."

Sartre has had recourse to this definition of freedom before. A few months ago, he was appealing to it in order to cast doubt on the right of an author to shut himself up in his writings when millions of people all over the world were hungry. Now first of all, the very defence of the freedom to have enough to eat and more than one pair of shoes implies in anybody who invokes it the existence of a "spirit of freedom" that is not abstract or general in the sense that it obliges him to come to the defence of other kinds of liberty too and without trying to rank them in their order of importance. But aside from this it is worth noticing that Sartre's definition is not a definition but a somewhat threadbare propaganda catch-phrase. It may well suit the uses of propaganda, but it can hardly meet the requirements of the only reader Sartre worries about—the reader who pays strict attention to words and their meaning.

What sort of freedom is it that consists in the "right" to more than one pair of shoes and enough to eat? Maybe Soviet citizens and Chinese citizens know; their respective constitutions "formally" recognise such a species of liberty and such rights. But in sound logic it is far from clear, even though many people think it is. In sound logic, which requires you to distinguish one thing from another, freedom can exist or not, be authentic or fictive, greater or less, but when it does exist it is a whole ensemble of political rights, while to have enough to eat and more than one pair of shoes is neither a freedom nor a right but a legitimate need that quite a few people think is better satisfied where political rights exist and are exercised than under state terror.

However that may be, the freedom to have two pairs of shoes and enough to eat is plainly not going to be won or even aided by the written word. It will be won, if it is, on farms and in factories by physical work and by trying to make farm and factory labour more efficient, in short by dirtying your hands—and not just your mind—in political action. It is high time for the citizen-writers of France and other places to stop pretending that talking about the "barefoot starving masses" of Asia and Africa and declaring their "solidarity" with them is contributing, even minimally, to giving them shoes and bread. It is high time too for these same citizen-writers to realise that if words do have their own kind of power, they have it when they are free, truthful, and to the point, not when their whole concern is to *serve* somebody or something.

To return to the Nobel Prize—Sartre gives a fresh proof of inconsistency in the argument he uses to justify himself for depriving a cause he holds dear of quite a lot of money; had he accepted the award, he was going to turn it over to the anti-*apartheid* movement in South Africa.

> It is true that in the name of general principles I am depriving the cause of substantial assistance, but it is also true that you cannot be asked to renounce your principles for 250,000 crowns, especially when those principles are not just yours but are shared by all your comrades.

At this juncture, on the contrary, it becomes particularly clear that Sartre's renunciation sprang from an impulsive need to stay on the good side of his own conscience and not at all, as he pretends, from the inexorable logic of the committed writer. That logic, in fact, would have driven him to accept the prize, however distasteful it was to him and his circle of friends. Thus the Anti-*Apartheid* Committee would have benefited tangibly from his action, which would have spoken louder to it than his words. The Committee, as far as is known, does not number among its own principles a Sartrian notion of commitment.

So it was to keep his soul pure and his hands clean that Sartre rejected the Nobel Prize—not to bear witness to the responsibility of the writer in modern times. This may not please his friends or suit his enemies, but no one who understands individual freedom in a full and unconditional sense can object.

Nicola Chiaromonte

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Saul Bellow

The Flight from Monologue — By TONY TANNER

> *In the midst of the continual movement that agitates a democratic community, the tie that unites one generation to another is relaxed or broken....It is not only confidence in this or that man which is destroyed, but the disposition to trust the authority of any man whatsoever. Everyone shuts himself tightly within himself and insists upon judging the world from there.*
>
> DE TOCQUEVILLE

REVIEWING some of Gide's autobiographical work in 1951, Saul Bellow noted his predilection for monologue and commented:

> The truth of monologue is exciting, but it is generally accidental in character; a man has only his own abilities to judge it with, and the assistance of other men, if he is a confirmed monologist, does not easily become available to him. ...As human isolation increases while education and abilities multiply, the most vital questions and answers become the internal ones. Sadly enough, the number of intelligent people whose most vital conversation is with themselves is growing....

Bellow knows that "dialogue, not monologue, is the foundation of a civilised life," yet his own work, from his earliest stories to his latest novel,[1] has presented us with a series of monologists whose most vital conversation is with themselves. They enact the plight which Bellow diagnosed—trapped, somehow, within their own heads, banished to lasting inwardness, mysteriously held *incommunicado* in the most crowded urban conglomerations in history. Bellow's work, as he said of Gide's, is full of "excellent monologists who want to advance to dialogue"—yet the advance is never fully made.

His first published piece of fiction was called, almost prophetically, *Two Morning Monologues*. It simply reveals the internal musings and agonisings of two characters: an unemployed man waiting to be called up, and a small-time gambler. The first is nearly "sunk," the second is mainly a loser; both are unwilling to participate in the accredited routines of society, refusing any attachment to an environment they resent and people they despise. One is a passive resister, the other a pushing manipulator; one is immobile, suspended; the other slips through, finds a way round. Both attempt to preserve their identity; one by supine a-social negation, the other by energetic a-social assertion. The unemployed man is "driven" but refuses to comply with the forceful drift: the gambler sees all life as chance and accepts it, trying to twist it to his own ends. The latter is a dodging, weaving, risking man: the former is a withdrawing, denying, dangling man. These two types, "shut tightly within themselves," are almost archetypes in Bellow's work.

Joseph, in *Dangling Man*, is a relation of the narrator of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*. Bitterly at odds with society, he spends his time entering his thoughts in a diary which aches with compulsive self-communing and exacerbated self-probing. He holds himself in brooding apartness to preserve a sense of individual freedom; but, as he realises, "goodness is achieved not in a vacuum, but in the company of other men, attended by love. I, in this room, separate, alienated, distrustful, find in my purpose not an open world, but a closed, hopeless jail. My perspectives end in the walls." His isolation is not a triumph, as he realises at the end. "I had not done well alone." He is frightened of being trapped and coerced in society, yet by the end his "freedom" has become a morose and futile acedia. The monologist yearns to widen his perspectives, but every foray into the world around him sends him scuttling back into the burrow of the self. Thus a basic rhythm is set up, to be repeated by other characters in Bellow's work. Approach towards others and retreat from them; search for identity and fear of definition; involvement followed by disentanglement. The desire for community

[1] *Herzog*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 21s.

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is counterbalanced by the instinct for flight. Plunges into what William James called "the rich thicket of reality" are offset by lonely flights of metaphysics. There is no true dialogue.

BELLOW'S SECOND NOVEL, *The Victim*, brilliantly explored the problem of man's relation to man in a society which is a turbulent sea of contesting greeds and fears. In the figure of Asa Leventhal, he has wonderfully caught the oppressed anxiety and sickly unease which modern man feels amidst the desperate, graceless motion and collision of this competitive, anomic age. Leventhal feels "that there was not a single part of him on which the whole world did not press with full weight," and indeed we see him forever knocking into things, banging himself against a packed and hampering environment. Bellow's great ability to evoke "the overwhelming human closeness and thickness" of the modern city is already in evidence (an ability which owes something to Dreiser, whose "carrying power" Bellow greatly admires). But the real focus is on the lonely Leventhal, stumbling through urban litter, racked by metaphysical questionings, trying to work out what are his true relations with Allbee, the anti-Semite with a grievance, who haunts him. He finally admits to some responsibility, but the end of the book scarcely presages a new sense of relationships and communication. There is, however, a hint that life might contain "a promise" which has not yet been properly explored.

Augie March undertakes that exploration. The riches of that book have been adequately acclaimed (in particular Bellow has something like a genius for evoking in heavy-pigmented prose the rich life of the Chicago ghetto). Augie is a much more energetic, mobile pursuer of destiny than his chair-rooted and heavy-footed predecessors. But though the tone is now more exuberant, open, life-welcoming—humorous rather than bilious—Augie does not establish any real relationships. The book is really the long monologue of a lonely man. Two quotations from Augie offer some light. "I touched all sides, and nobody knew where I belonged. I had no good idea of that myself." And: "I didn't want to be what they made of me but wanted to please them. Kindly explain! An independent fate, and love too—what confusion!" Augie indeed celebrates the self—but he can find nothing to do with it. He is a perennial American figure, rather like Henry James' American, who has "the look of being committed to nothing in particular, of standing in an attitude of general hospitality to the chances of life." He wants an identity and role, yet is wary of all social definitions. He allows himself to drift into all kinds of involving situations, but is always careful to elude the grip of society's many manipulating hands. He talks of "love" but ultimately cares little about the fate of other people. He resists all "determinisms" but the result is that his scattered adventures never add up to a destiny. Like Walt Whitman, he is "in and out of the game." He ends up a curiously light, even insubstantial figure.

IT WAS WHITMAN who first defined this paradox which runs through much American writing. For Whitman asserted two contradictory values, two divergent dreams—the establishing of a new community ("ensemble") based on equality and love, *and* "individuality, the pride and centripetal isolation of a human being in himself—identity—personalism." A recent critic, A. N. Kaul, has pointed to this as a basic problem in American writing: "A common theme of the American imagination has been the problem of reconciling individual freedom with a mode of social life to which the individual can give his allegiance without danger of impairing his moral, spiritual, or psychological integrity." Many American characters yearn for a true "ensemble" (which would lead to dialogue), but they cling even more passionately to "individuality" (which condemns them to monologue). In one sense *Augie March* is

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rather like "Song of Myself" set in Dreiser's heavier, more impinging, more constricting urban world. Consider this definition of Whitman's poem by Richard Chase:

> The "self" who is the protagonist of Whitman's poem is a character portrayed in a recognisable American way; it illustrates the fluid, unformed personality exulting alternately in its provisional attempts to define itself and in its sense that it has no definition.... Of great importance is the fact that most of "Song of Myself" has to do not with the self searching for a final identity but with the self taking on a bewildering variety of identities and with a truly virtuoso agility extracting itself from each one.

That describes an important aspect of Augie very well. By the end of the book he has done dozens of jobs, met hundreds of people, screwed not a few, and even married one. But after all the collisions, the embraces, and the flights he remains at the end related to no one—unattached, uncommitted, undefined. Underneath his exhilarating rhetoric one sometimes hears a faint echo of that saddest of lines from that loneliest of characters, Melville's Bartleby, who could only say "I would prefer not to."

WHERE AUGIE MARCH WAS slippery and adaptable, adroit and lucky in his evasion of the encroaching pressures of society, Tommy Wilhelm in *Seize the Day* is crushed, arrested, all but strangled by the unavoidable suffocating weight of the world around him. It is a world completely corrupted by "money", where "freedom" is meaningless without wealth, and "love" another word for cruel personal exploitation. The irony of the title refers to the persuasive advice given to Tommy by Dr. Tamkin, a brilliant pseudo-philosopher who bewilders Tommy with a farrago of confused but glamorous ideas. He tells Tommy "Only the present is real—the here-and-now. Seize the day!" (*Carpe diem*, perhaps; but also an echo from Emerson, that great apostle of self-reliance who never lived to see the difficulties involved in following his advice in modern America.) But all Tamkin does is trick Tommy out of his last seven hundred dollars. High ideas are debased to being part of a con man's patter.[2] In effect the day seizes Tommy. Passive, put-upon, spent, he is far from singing the self or breaking through to that more loving, constructive way of life which he feels ought to be possible. So far from attaining to dialogue, he ends by weeping over an unknown corpse.

IN HIS NEXT BOOK Bellow created a character directly opposed to Wilhelm. Henderson in *Henderson, the Rain King*, is a giant character, liberated from the constraints of money-problems and society, able to move outside the pressing determinisms which brought Tommy so low. He is big enough and free enough to confront man as pure spirit and evolutionary potential, instead of man as a victim of social forces. After realism, Bellow turned to romance. Yet Henderson is still a recognisable Bellow character. He has vague idealistic yearnings; he wants to fulfil the self in some genuine way and at the same time he wants to find a valid and rewarding role in society. He is protean, yet eager for a defining shape. His visit to Africa starts with a sudden revulsion from all the suffocating litter and rubble of contemporary civilised life. He makes a colossal effort of disburdenment because he feels his true self is lying "buried" within him under all the clutter and junk. He is the quintessence of ignorant, questing, well-intentioned individualism—"an exceptional amalgam of vehement forces." His prime need is to release that vehemence and awaken to reality and true selfhood. In his Africa, which is perhaps what the French call *l'Afrique de l'esprit* ("There is all Africa and her prodigies in us" as Sir Thomas Browne said—and Bellow has never been to Africa), Henderson undergoes the strange tutelage of Dahfu, who tells him that some new conception of the self is needed, something more "noble" with less "ego-emphasis." Henderson's initiation into the secrets of the deep, forgotten animal life in man (an initiation which was possibly influenced by the work of Wilhelm Reich) is all part of his quest to find some true way of realising the self. Henderson, like other characters in Bellow's work, wants to find out how a man can properly *submit* to reality (as Augie submitted to his "axial lines"), and at the same time *transcend* himself and slough off hampering limitations and encrustations. There are many Nietzschean echoes in the book, and indeed the motto of the prolonged metaphysical quest which occupies much of the book could be Zarathustra's contention that "Man is a thing to be surmounted." Henderson desperately wants to find a new hope, a new nobility in life—"Humankind has to sway itself more intentionally towards beauty"—but though he learns many new ideas it is hard to feel, at the end, as he returns to his

[2] Bellow is clearly interested in masterful talkers, people who manipulate other people through words. He once interviewed the great con man, Yellow Kid Weil, whose self-justification was "How was I to live? My power lay in words. In words I become a commander." In a world of semi-literacy, the power to command through words becomes a terrible and easily abused power. Remember Hitler's voice? Bellow is very aware that words are now used more for exploitation than communication—deception rather than dialogue.

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wife with the intention of entering medical school, that his ebullient and tormenting individualism will ever be really surmounted or transformed. What he says at the start—"Society is what beats me. Alone I can be pretty good"—is scarcely modified at the end (like Augie, he talks of "love" but seldom manifests it). There seems to be no obvious way in which he can apply the lessons he learnt from his strange African quest (which is at times referred to as a "dream").

But perhaps this is Bellow's most interesting point. He once referred to the novel as being about "the comedy of self-concern" and in many essays he has explored the dangers of over-valuing, as well as under-valuing, the self. There is such a discrepancy between what the human imagination can conceive and yearn for, and what the physical individual can achieve, that the attempt to translate metaphysical aspirations into action may be comically foredoomed to failure. Henderson is a marvellous comic creation, trying anything and everything to "burst the spirit's sleep," bawling and tripping around on the edge of all sorts of new wisdom, but at the same time he is a tremendously egotistical and presumptuous buffoon. He can be almost ridiculous in his grandiloquence ("If I couldn't have my soul it would cost the earth a catastrophe") and like other Bellow figures he approaches solipsism ("Reality is *you*," he says to his face in a mirror). Is the book perhaps a critique of romantic individualism—showing intense subjectivity both in its high-flying grandeur and its stumbling futility? Is Henderson perhaps the funniest monologist of them all, escaping from the mess of his American life into the wonder of his African reverie? A man may throw off society to wander untrammelled through vistas of new possibilities and dreams of new definitions of man—but is this the best way to engage reality?

A MAN is sitting in a New York apartment waiting for a woman who is undressing in the next room. He has had a good meal: they will make love. But, characteristically, he starts "quivering" with his "wild internal disorder." An intense, questioning self-communing commences:

> And why? Because he let the entire world press upon him. For instance? Well, for instance, what it means to be a man. In a city. In transition. In a mass transformed by science. Under organised power. Subject to tremendous controls. In a condition caused by mechanisation. After the late

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> failure of radical hopes. In a society that was no community and devalued the person. Owing to the multiplied power of numbers which made the self negligible.... Which permitted savagery and barbarism in its own great cities. At the same time, the pressure of human millions who have discovered what concerted effort and thought can do.... You—you yourself are a child of this mass and a brother to all the rest. Or else an ingrate, dilettante, idiot. There, Herzog, thought Herzog, since you ask for the instance, is the way it runs. On top of that, an injured heart, and raw gasoline poured on the nerves.... Oh, for a change of heart, a change of heart—a true change of heart.

However, he does have an erection, and shortly he joins the woman in bed.

This is Moses E. Herzog, who gives his name to Bellow's new novel. This book—in many ways Bellow's most impressive to date—seems to summarise and contain all the questions, problems, feelings, plights, and aspirations worked over in the previous novels, and it follows them to their extreme conclusions. Herzog himself is clearly a descendant, if not a summation, of Bellow's other main characters—worried, harassed, brought down, messed up. His private life is at a point of chaos—for he is trying to recover from a disastrous second marriage which has just ended in divorce. He is condemned to perpetual compulsive introspection, the victim of endless nagging cerebration. He seems terribly isolated and cut-off, wandering the congested city streets, brooding apart in lonely rooms. He is the silent monologist *par excellence*.

The book contains few actual incidents—an abortive trip to Vineyard Haven, a night with a girl friend, a visit to Chicago to see one of his children which ends in a car crash, his return to an old tumbledown house in the country which was where his second marriage reached its crisis. The significant action takes place mainly in his head. People and incidents teem through his memory, precipitating great bouts of agitated soul-searching and pounding speculation. More than that, his mind heaves under the pressure and weight of the modern city and the innumerable problems of the modern age. Ultimately he finds himself struggling with the deepest questions and mysteries of human existence. He constantly returns to that central problem in Bellow's work—what is it to be truly human? As a physical being, Herzog's relationships are fouled up, he is separated from his children, he is one of the struggling, sweating mass—powerless, something of a failure, not a little lost. Yet his circling mind will not be stilled. There is irony as well as urgency in his predicament, and Bellow excels himself in this book by presenting not only the importance, but also the curse and the comedy of intense but "unemployed" consciousness. Herzog's is a representative modern intelligence—swamped with ideas, metaphysics and values, and surrounded by messy facts. It labours to cope with them all. The book enacts that labour.

AT FIRST SIGHT the meaning of the book might seem to be the sum of all the dozens of ideas that course through Herzog's head. Yet a more careful view reveals a deeper, subtler intent. The book moves from a corrosive internal restlessness to a point of temporary rest, and the most important meaning is in that actual movement: the interior turbulence finally giving way to a glimpse of peace. The important point to grasp is that Herzog is sick, in the throes of a riotous subjectivism. In his solitude he wants "to explain, to have it out, to justify, to put in perspective, to clarify." He is in the grip of a compulsion to understand, and this compulsion manifests itself in a habit of making endless, fragmentary jottings and writing letters—to friends, relations, dead ancestors, politicians, philosophers, finally to God. Many of them are unfinished, none of them, so far as we know, are ever sent. Perhaps they are all imaginary, part of his internal continuum, sudden moments of excited hyper-consciousness when the mind engages in silent partnerless dialogues—"having it out," trying to clarify. Meanwhile, Herzog is usually sitting or lying down, self-enwrapped, inert "in the coop of his privacy." For the bulk of the book we are in that coop with him—going over things, witnesses of his endless silent self-examination. It is as though he has been rendered immobile by his vulnerability to unrelated ideas. His mind is endlessly active, but it has no certainties, no fixed points, no sure focus. It is a mind on the rack. "He wrote to Spinoza. *Thoughts not causally connected were said by you to cause pain. I find that is indeed the case. Random association, when the intellect is passive, is a form of bondage.*" His thinking, like his life, is mismanaged and patternless. Unlike Proust he does not recapture the past: he is intermittently possessed by it. He is the victim of his own interior monologue.

He tries to "make steady progress from disorder to harmony," but as we follow the ramifications of his ungovernable memory and the fretful reachings of his mind we realise that this very compulsion to try to understand and explain everything mentally might be the most disabling sickness of all. While he writes his furious letters to the void, reality ebbs away from him.

One example. On a train journey he starts letters to people as various as Adlai Stevenson, his girl friend Ramona, Nehru, Commissioner

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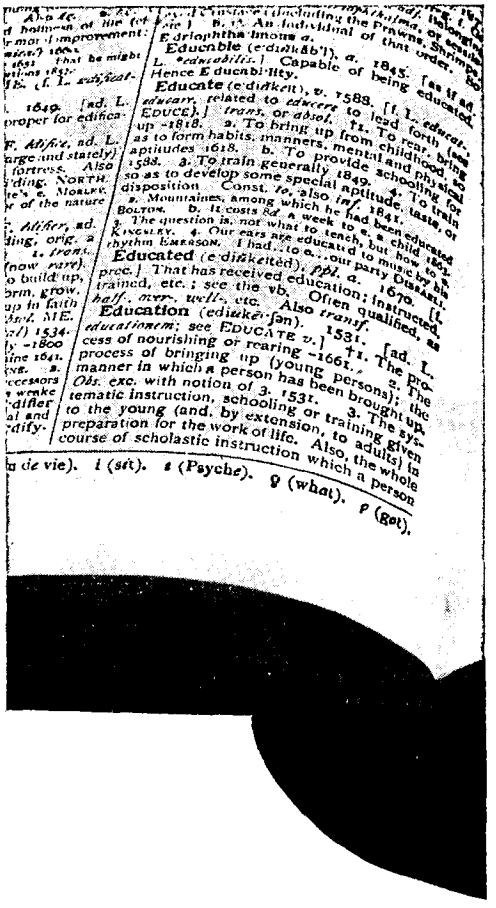
Wilson, and himself. His mood is anything but stable:

> Quickly, quickly, more! . . . Herzog, now barely looking through the tinted, immovable, sealed window, felt his eager flying spirit streaming out, speaking, piercing, making clear judgments, uttering final explanations, necessary words only. He was in a whirling ecstasy. He felt at the same time that his judgments expressed the boundless, baseless bossiness and wilfulness, the nagging embodied in his mental constitution.

The sealed window—the soaring mind: the certainty as to the value of his thoughts—a suspicion that they are the symptoms of some personal feverish disequilibrium. This is typical Herzog. He cannot select or filter his thoughts. "I am a prisoner of perception." The prison he has to break out of is not so much society as his own head. The enemy is inside. As he says, he feels there is someone inside him "pounding for order," and he complains—*"I am in his grip . . . he will ruin me."* The interior monologist is suffering from the disease of monologising to himself.

IN A SENSE the whole book takes place in Herzog's head; a reminiscence which ends where it began. At the beginning we encounter him in a state of "tranquillity" in his old country house, and at the end we return to that point, having seen all the turmoil which preceded that new tranquillity. True, the cityscapes through which our lonely metaphysician wanders are incomparably vivid, detailed, and pungent; essentially *there*, so that we can really feel the chaotic background against which the modern mind has to work. Herzog feels part of the urban mess, and indeed there seems to be at times an intimate connection between the city and his thoughts. Perhaps the teeming confusion of its tumult agitates his mind into a state of over-excited emulation—the city triggering off spasms of unrelated thoughts, just as the thoughts sometimes grind to an inconclusive halt in the congestion of the city streets.

But the actual incidents do not come to us direct: rather, they are re-enacted and pondered over in Herzog's memory. For it is in his mind that Herzog is seeking some lost reality, some necessary key which will help him to return to the norms from which he has wandered and blundered into his personal chaos and separation. It is as though he is trying to extract some sense of significance and lineage from his random, disconnected past. Often he goes into a sort of catatonic trance, engulfed by the past and consequent reflections. "Engrossed, unmoving in his chair, Herzog listened to the dead at their dead quarrels." Some of the most moving scenes are of his youth, the sufferings



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of his "late unlucky family," all re-created with an astonishing wealth of compelling detail. More than that, he has to expose himself to everything—the incomprehensible evil he hears of in the court-room, the sexual assault he suffered as a child—before he can learn true acceptance and a new orientation. Mental regurgitation is part of his therapy: the way back to a point from which his life can be resumed lies through memory. His achievement is to confront, and come to terms with, everything in his head. Not only does he recall all the many people he has met, people who have imposed on him and exploited him, people he has himself loved and let down; he also wrestles with many of the abstract issues which have vexed other protagonists in Bellow's work. What is the value of the self in an age of exploding population and mass-killings? What does "freedom" mean when even to step out into the street is to be buffeted by evidence of limitations? Despite all the black evidence, Herzog refuses pessimism. Spengler's theory of the decline of the West fills him with rage. When he reads that Heidegger talks about "the fall into the quotidian" he dashes off a letter asking, "When did this fall occur? Where were we standing when it happened?" The potentialities of human life must be perennial. Evil exists—but we must look away from it, beyond it. He feels our age is too fond of regarding itself as monstrous, that an insidious prestige is now attached to "the negative." We concentrate on Death and Cruelty and vengefully deny all possibilities of transcendence. The modern imagination feeds on horror as a pig at a trough. "Safe, comfortable people playing at crisis, alienation, apocalypse, and desperation, make me sick." So he writes to a fellow professor:

> *Has the filthy moment come when moral feeling dies, conscience disintegrates, and respect for liberty, law, decency, all the rest collapse in cowardice, decadence, blood? . . . I can't accept this foolish dreariness. We are talking about the whole life of mankind!*

Herzog wants to get away from the dangerous attractions of nihilism. He is working for a change of heart.

YET THERE IS COMEDY in Herzog's inner gesturing—legislating for mankind while he is crammed helplessly in a subway car. Balance is restored by continual reminders of Herzog as a struggling, sweating, physical creature. He often breaks off a letter in a spirit of self-mockery, realising how absurd he is being. We catch him at a transition point, coming awake to the ludicrous side of his conviction that "the progress of civilisation—indeed, the survival of civilisation—depended on the success of Moses E. Herzog." After all, his own life has been "a catalogue of errors"; he has been self-righteous, self-pitying, conceited in his suffering, egotistical (he is often caught looking at his own reflection—he is an unusually self-absorbed and self-important man). His thoughts are valuable, but in the end it is the comic futility of his thinking that strikes him. Throughout the book we are aware of a growing desire to pass beyond all ideas, all mental "explanations," all "abstract intellectual work," in an attempt to re-establish contact with ordinary reality. The letters Herzog writes merely serve to emphasise his indrawn-ness and apartness, but they are indications of an important aspiration. "I seem to have been stirred fiercely by a desire to communicate, or by the curious project of attempted communication." The monologist desperately wants to advance to dialogue. Too much solitary thinking has dislodged him from the world to a dangerous degree. To re-enter it he has to pass beyond thought altogether.

This provides the climax of the book. After the peak confusion of his Chicago venture—the car crash, the police interrogation—he starts to relax, to sink down into what James called "the lap of the actual."

> Is this, by chance, the reality you have been looking for, Herzog, in your earnest Herzog way? Down in the ranks with other people—ordinary life? By yourself you can't determine which reality is real?

He starts to re-acquaint himself with the ordinary world with deep gladness, learning new humility, new faith. Returning to the debris of his country house (which reflects perhaps the mess of his own life), he acquires a new calm as he ceases to strive for comprehension: "Go through what is comprehensible and you conclude that only the incomprehensible gives any light." The curse of pointless thought is lifting and he is on the verge of a new health, stirred by "indefinite music within." Instead of perverse self-communing, he now looks forward to "real, relevant work." He decides that he will "surrender the hyperactivity of this hyperactive face. But just to put it out instead to the radiance of the sun." He intends from now on "to share with other human beings"—in other words to move from monologue to dialogue.

The prose of the last chapter of the book is extremely specific and at the same time brimming with lyricism. It communicates Herzog's new delight in the simple objects around his house and the loveliness of the garden; his dawning reverence for the concrete, the rich plenitude of the seen world. At the same time

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it catches his inner trembling fervour as he moves beyond thought to a mood which is almost mystical. He is surcharged with a strange joy—mortal, but with transcendent intimations. In such a mood he can well drop a few lines to God: *"How my mind has struggled to make coherent sense. I have not been too good at it. But have desired to do your unknowable will, taking it and you, without symbols. Everything of intensest significance. Especially if divested of me."*

He seems to have broken out of the prison of the self. At the end we see him stretched out on a couch, for the first time experiencing a true pervading quiet after the remorseless inner clamouring which has racked him throughout the book. He stops writing letters.

> At this time he had no message for anyone. Nothing. Not a single word.

So the book ends. The resolution is completely internal. Externally there is still mess extending in all directions, but he has won through to a new attitude to it. We do not see his new good intentions in action. The book takes Herzog to the end of sickness and the beginning of a promise of cure. The inward work has been done. He has endured thought and memory to the point of madness; now he has passed beyond them to a state of calm, quiescent readiness. We feel a novel joyous sanity growing out of his harassed neurotic exhaustion. No new meanings, no solutions: rather, a change of heart, a turning to the sun. Not mere resignation, but a profound "let be," accompanied by peace and a prayer of praise such as can only be uttered on the other side of suffering.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT the name Bellow chose for his most important protagonist to date. In 1950 Maurice Herzog, leading a French Himalayan expedition, conquered the first 8,000-metre peak, Annapurna. It was a climb of extraordinary difficulty, calling for phenomenal feats of endurance and bravery. In his own account of the climb Herzog wrote:

> In overstepping our limitations, in touching the extreme boundaries of man's world, we have come to know something of its true splendour. In my worst moments of anguish I seemed to discover the deep significance of existence of which till then I had been unaware.... The marks of my ordeal are apparent on my body. I was saved and I had won my freedom. This freedom, which I shall never lose, has given me the assurance and serenity of a man who has fulfilled himself. It has given me the rare joy of loving that which I used to despise. In this narrative... we bear witness.

"Maurice" is another form of "Moshe"—as is "Moses." My guess is that Bellow may have had

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Maurice, the great climber, in mind (and, of course, the original Moses climbed a mountain and came near to God). Moses Herzog could almost have written those words of Maurice Herzog, although his assault, ordeal, and newfound joy all take place inside him. In the figure of Moses Herzog, Bellow seems to have recorded the process and completion of some far-reaching inward exploration; a feat of internal "climbing," rewarded by a new sense of joy and freedom. In *Herzog* Saul Bellow himself seems to "bear witness." As Maurice Herzog wrote: "There are other Annapurnas in the lives of men."

IN AN ARTICLE written in 1957, Bellow complained that "impotence has received more attention from modern writers than any other subject." He cited a variety of passive and alienated characters from Oblomov to Dostoevsky's underground man and commented: "They all tell the same story. The dread is great, the soul is small; man might be godlike but he is wretched; the heart should be open but it is sealed by fear." Yet consider Bellow's own characters—how lonely, insulated, and self-absorbed they are! That is why there is so little action in his novels. His characters seem to be in a state which external reality cannot penetrate for any length of time. Few of them actually *do* anything—a lot of Augie's adventures tend to be sexual in a not very profound way, while Henderson's puffings and blowings expend themselves in a land of romance. Bellow's characters want to understand the world, but they do not know how to act in it. As long as they are in a realistic setting they tend to be passive and immobile, neurotically lost in their own thoughts. They are as impotent and introspective as those lame, out-of-touch characters whose prevalence in modern fiction Bellow laments. Joseph is an underground man, and Herzog—so often prone and musing—is touched with Oblomovism. But they are not happy in this condition. Joseph yearned for some true community and Herzog really believes that "brotherhood is what makes a man human.... 'Man liveth not by Self alone but in his brother's face.'... The real and essential question is one of your employment by other human beings and their employment by us." Yet in none of the novels do we see the yearning fulfilled or the conviction put into practice. To revert to the terms we have been using, none of his characters really advance to dialogue. Norman Mailer made a valid comment on Bellow when he wrote: "He creates individuals but not relations between them, at least not yet." The fact remains that though his characters want to enter society, their notion of social fulfilment is often theoretic and ideal. Lionel Trilling, speaking of the political disenchantment felt by many Americans, once wrote: "Although we are willing, nay eager, to live in society, for we all piously know that man fulfils himself in society, yet we do not consent to live in a particular society of the present." He goes on to say that something in the American temperament dislikes the idea of being "conditioned" and adds, with words relevant for Bellow's characters, "somewhere in our mental constitution is the demand for life as pure spirit." Bellow's figures do seem to find the inner world of spirit more real than the outer conditioned public world, no matter how much they deplore the fact. It is not for nothing that the last book Herzog dips into is by a Russian who asserts "that private life is above everything.... It is a joy to be choked with thought." Herzog has come to find it a curse and is willing to move out of the private realm. But we do not see that willingness resulting in a new way of life.

CONSIDER THE ENDINGS of the novels. A man capitulating to the army; another sobbing in a funeral parlour; Augie standing in the cold French countryside; Henderson running round the Arctic wastes between plane stops. Herzog we leave on a couch in a disordered country house. All have tasks and journeys unfinished, problems unresolved, resolutions untested. These endings are vivid pictures—momentary gestures of hope, readiness, and reconciliation. They are often vibrantly, emotionally "right": yet from another point of view they could be called "conclusions in which nothing is concluded." Georg Lukács thinks that much modern literature, "by exalting man's subjectivity, at the expense of the objective reality of his environment," has in fact impoverished human life. He points to the "attenuation of actuality" in much modern work and relates it to the "surrender to subjectivity" so prevalent in our age. Instead of dialectic between man and environment we get interior monologue: the result is works which tend to be "static and sensational" rather than "dynamic and developmental." Now of course Bellow himself is supremely aware of this *malaise*, but the fact remains that he has yet to show the compulsive subjectivism of his characters actually transcended or left behind.

This, I think, explains certain characteristics of his work. Since his characters seldom initiate any action, his books lack the spine of plot. They have little dynamic dramatic necessity. This leads to a split: the internal emotional and intellectual development can be moving and convincing, the external chain of events is often rather random, meagre, and uncompelling (*The*

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Victim is an exception here). The result is that, at times, there is nothing to shape, organise and discipline the endless flow of metaphysical garrulousness and wayward reminiscing. One sometimes longs for some significant interaction between the character and his environment. What carries the work is Bellow's own style. It can be exhilarating in its cascading vitality, breathtaking in its robust assimilatory zeal, very humane in the attention it loves to lavish on the humblest particulars of ordinary life. It can be comic and woeful, physical or metaphysical—whatever the mood of the character.[3]

Of course, his books show a marked progress. From a sulky, even churlish mood of passive non-participation, through a positive celebration of the self, thence to a quest into the complex meanings of selfhood, on to a genuine attempt to affirm positive values which transcend the self altogether. Herzog is wiser than Joseph, develops more of a conscience than Leventhal, is more weightily mature than Augie, more resilient than Tommy, more authentic than Henderson. Yet he does share one interesting trait with the other characters. At the end of his exhausting introspective journey he seems closer to "God" than he does to his relatives or to his girl friend Ramona. (Unlike some critics, I must confess that I find this last relationship pretty shallow.) Similarly Augie feels he gets in harmony with the "axial lines" of existence, but he is scarcely in harmony with any actual human beings. Tommy Wilhelm has a vision of universal brotherhood and weeps for all men who must die—but he is far from sorting things out with his wife and father. What I think happens is this. Failing to experience any specific sense of relationship with other people and contemporary society, Bellow's characters respond to a more mystical sense of one-ness with some "larger body" which is transpersonal and relates them to the very currents of Being. Outcasts of society, they yet have moments when they feel at home in the universe. Again there are precedents in Whitman. A comment Bellow once made on contemporary American novelists is, in fact, self-applicable:

> American novelists are not ungenerous, far from it, but as their idea of society is fairly shallow, their moral indignation is non-specific. What seems to be lacking is a firm sense of a common world, a coherent community, a genuine purpose in life.

Those last three things are lacking in his own work, although the fact that Herzog genuinely reaches a stage where he seems on the point of acquiring that "firm sense" of ordinary reality and community seems to indicate that Bellow has completed a major phase in his evolution as a novelist. It remains to be seen whether Herzog's new-won attitudes towards reality will result in a new type of novel from Bellow.

THERE ARE SEVERAL reasons for Bellow's emergence as the most important American post-war novelist—his sheer intelligence, his firm grasp of many of the central problems, concerns and paradoxes of modern urban thinking man, his matchless feeling for cities—but perhaps one of the most important is his refusal to relinquish a sense of possible individual worth. He wrote once:

[3] This amazing and profuse verbal energy is perhaps a particularly Jewish aspect of his writing. He once wrote, of the ghetto, that "powerlessness appears to force people to have recourse to words" —an insight which extends far beyond the ghetto. Also of ordinary Yiddish conversation he said that it teems with historical and mythical allusions; metaphysical speculations and kitchen matters come bundled up together. Discussion of an egg may involve the Creation, The Fall, and the Flood. Clearly his own style has a debt to this habit. Because Bellow can handle ideas so vigorously and evoke scenes so vividly we tend to forget how little true human drama there is in his work.

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> We have so completely debunked the old idea of the Self that we can hardly continue in the same way.... Undeniably the human being is not what he commonly thought a century ago. The question nevertheless remains. He is something. What is he?

He has often taken issue with other writers who almost sadistically diminish the human image in their work, and he himself holds firmly to this tenet of faith—"I do not believe that human capacity to feel or do can really have dwindled or that the quality of humanity has degenerated." Agreed, the Self needs to be redefined—but not degraded. As he says, novelists "must value human existence or be unfaithful to their calling." Leslie Fiedler, to take a well-known example, asserts that "to fulfil its essential moral obligation (serious) fiction must be negative." Artists must say "No! in thunder." Bellow has written well against the limitations of this doctrinaire negativism (though I think he underestimates the way in which a negative work may, in fact, affirm the superior power of human imagination and craft over hostile or recalcitrant matter). His own position is dignified—never didactic or glib. It is not folly to stress a need for new positive values—it may be dangerous to become too domiciled in the abyss. His own work is most honest and compelling when it points to that need. As we have seen, he cannot produce an authentic image of the desiderated new way of life. His work is full of would-be celebrants, moving slowly, heavily, out of some over-long and suffocating imprisonment in their own undirected, over-active consciousnesses.

Some critics find a positive affirmative joy, a mood of radiant reconciliation in his work (one critic thinks it is specifically "Hassidic"). I think there are a few such moments, but Bellow does hit some false notes where the euphoria is unconvincing and the joy too stridently asserted. He rightly condemns the "unearned" pessimism of many contemporary writers—but there is such a thing as unearned gladness as well. What he does show is the movement towards such a joy, the dawning recognition that such a reconciliation need not be an impossibility. He shows us contemporary man in all the comedy and anguish of trying to cope with the disorderly mess of modern life pouring in from all sides—haunted by failure, threatened by insanity, bedevilled by ideas he can never use, and occasionally lit up by intimations of irrational joy. Bellow knows the "thousand negatives" that can be uttered about "the individual life": he knows, too, that "the sacred affirmative" will not easily be found (the terms are Emerson's). But he believes it must

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be a possibility[4] and he is working to make sure that, should it be uttered, it will be understood. As he once wrote:

> If the human pride of artists has indeed exhausted the miracle of this world then nothing in art is necessary, all is superfluous. But here is the living man, and the last word concerning him cannot be imagined. We shall never know him in his entirety. Now, waiting in the darkness to be reanimated by a fresh impulse, we feel painfully the weight of everything superfluous.... But we know that something necessary, something not to be evaded, is due and overdue.

It is no small praise to say that Bellow is one of the few writers likely to bring us news of the next "necessary thing," uttering words about the living man to which the living man will keenly listen.

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Voices from the Crowd: Against the H-Bomb. Edited by DAVID BOULTON. Foreword by Michael Foot. *Peter Owen*, 25s.

With the slogans "No Multilateral Force! Slash the Arms Bill! For Racial Equality! No Arms for South Africa!", the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Labour Peace Fellowship and the Movement for Colonial Freedom are joining in a new campaign to press their ideas on the Government.—THE TIMES, December 9th, 1964.

YET WHEN the CND held its annual conference last November at St. Pancras Town Hall, scene of so many passionate protest meetings between 1958 and 1963 against the light which is brighter than a thousand suns, many of its former leaders were absent. Its former vice-president, Mr. Anthony Greenwood, is now a member of a Cabinet staunchly pledged to NATO, a Labour Cabinet that may in due course approve West German participation in an Atlantic nuclear force; and other prominent CND members who marched under the trident of neutralism in the early 1960s are now apparently loyal government back-benchers. Little wonder that during CND's conference many of the speakers assumed that the campaign was played out. Indeed, there could hardly have been a better time both for the publication of Mr. Driver's history of the CND and Mr. Boulton's anthology of writing sympathetic to the campaign, its contributions often underscoring Mr. Driver's points, and, of course, unwittingly, many of the charges made against CND by its opponents. Nevertheless, these two volumes do make it possible for the first time to look at the rise and fall of CND with some perspective.

His publishers claim that Mr. Driver tells "the story of the CND and its offshoots to date." It would, perhaps, have been preferable to have announced that the story is told from a viewpoint generally sympathetic to CND. But it should be immediately noted that, whatever his viewpoint, the author has done a great deal of work in writing this history, and that anyone interested in the CND story or even in the history of the British Labour Party Left in the 20th century will discover that this book is immensely useful. Mr. Driver has interviewed many of the participants in the marches and demonstrations, studied their pamphlets, many of which have been extremely difficult to obtain, and he invariably gives the dates and sources of his many quotations.

Important, too, is the way Mr. Driver has explored both the origins of CND, how it evolved in January 1958 from the National Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests formed a year before, and the later development of the split in the movement as a whole between the followers of Canon Collins, that pragmatic ecclesiastic, and Lord Russell, the disciple of reason, his utterances yet strongly imbued with a depressing mixture of chiliastic prophesies and original sin. It's most interesting, I think, to be reminded here that the roots of CND go back to the obscure, pacifist, anti-nuclear demonstrations such as "Operation Gandhi" which took place during 1951–52, and that again during 1954–55 when the full implications of thermonuclear weapons became apparent and when the 1955 Defence White Paper announced the U.K.'s intention to manufacture hydrogen bombs, there was another

[4] This is an honourable position, not without distinguished precedents. I quote some words of Conrad—not usually considered a facile optimist—words with which I think Bellow would concur: "I would require from him [the artist] many acts of faith of which the first would be the cherishing of an undying hope.... What one feels so hopelessly barren in declared pessimism is just its arrogance. It seems as if the discovery made by many men at various times that there is so much evil in the world were a source of proud and unholy joy unto some modern writers. That frame of mind is not the proper one in which to approach seriously the art of fiction.... To be hopeful in an artistic sense it is not necessary to think that the world is good. It is enough to believe that there is no impossibility of its being made so."

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politically abortive public debate on the nuclear problem.

Few, I imagine, would dispute Mr. Driver's analysis of why the CND came to be born in January 1958 and not before. Already the events of 1956, from the advent of Jimmy Porter to Suez, had broken that carapace of satisfaction which had lingered on in British life from the 1940s. But then in 1957 the strategic pattern of super-power relationships that we live with today emerged. The first British H-bomb was exploded, the Sandys Defence White Paper of that year announced a new reliance on nuclear, rather than conventional forces, and "that there is at present no means of providing adequate protection for the people of this country." In October, at the Labour Party Conference, Aneurin Bevan became the lost leader of the Labour Left with his dismissal of unilateralism as an "emotional spasm," and on the day the Conference broke up the U.S.S.R. launched Sputnik I: Moscow now had the capability to strike at American cities. For Mao Tse-tung Sputnik meant that the East Wind was triumphing over the West Wind; in the United States the shock of the Soviet technical advances meant the eventual evolution, under the Democrats, of the strategy of flexible response. Mr. Khrushchev himself, until the Cuban market collapsed in 1962, so forcing a new concert of the superpowers, began intensive trading in missile futures; and in Britain for the next half-decade all discussion of foreign and defence policies was bedevilled by the activities of the disarmers.

Inevitably, I think, the events of 1957 were bound to provoke in Britain some sort of protest against the new balance of terror. And it must be admitted that the Government should have and could have done much more to explain the realities behind Western strategy to the public. No one could claim that the Sandys White Paper, with its chilling honesty, was an inspiring document. In matters relating to the life and death of the people, as Mr. Churchill well knew in 1940, the statistical truth is inadequate. And the result of this fumbling by the authorities meant the emergence of one of the most potentially dangerous threats to democratic institutions in this country during the present century. At the beginning of the CND's activities, of course, it was only too understandable that many people from all parties, as well as honourable pacifists, supported the march against the bomb, in addition to the activists of the Labour Left who were at the heart of the CND from the very beginning—the detritus of the 1930s, *Stalinisant* opponents of Attlee and Bevin, the compulsive appeasers of totalitarianism, the eternal anti-Americans. But if the Macmillan administration's error lay in realism

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that bordered on cynicism, the story of CND is one of justifiable protest gone berserk in an age when as never before a true marriage of idealism and realism in all discussion relating to defence policy is necessary.

THERE ARE, I believe, three serious faults with *The Disarmers*. In the first place, Mr. Driver idealises the history of CND to an unjustifiable degree. Marching under "the most powerful, memorable, and adaptable image ever devised for a secular cause," were the teenagers, "a new cohesive estate of the realm." This "modern Canterbury Tale" was a centre in which, according to a New Left sociologist whom Mr. Driver quotes approvingly, "all the best social tendencies of our society (gained) expression." "There were the guitars and the singing, the fleeting glimpses of cultural heroes, the general air of not-too-tightly organised jamboree in which a boy and a girl could slip off on an evening to fry sausages on sticks beside the Thames." (Perhaps Mr. Driver might have admitted that activities other than sausage-frying took place in the ditches and groves by the river and along the A4—but surely the kissing was the least reprehensible of all the vast range of activities under the CND's umbrella?)

This representation of the CND as a life-enhancing, beneficent social movement is, to put it mildly, open to great doubt. It is arguable, to say the least, that a large proportion of the marchers soon represented no more than the products of normal anti-parental revolt, plus the alienated and the estranged that exist in any mass society. Whatever the original anti-nuclear anxiety behind the marchers, in its later stages the movement had become more interested, as Mr. Driver admits, "in uprooting than in manipulating the decision-making processes of British society." Moreover, the Campaign's leaders were addicted to a form of wild exaggeration that became more and more politically dangerous as the battle was extended from the streets and the missile sites to the conference halls of the Labour Party:

> Everyone at the top knows there is no defence to nuclear warfare. We are being fobbed off with a goddam lie . . . because we are the satellite of a nation of which the people are charming, but with a government riddled with the folly of thinking in the past and with hysteria against Communism, which puts them in the hands of the military gentlemen at the Pentagon. . . .
> (*Canon Collins*, 1960)

> We used to call Hitler wicked for killing off the Jews, but Kennedy and Macmillan are much more wicked than Hitler. . . . We cannot obey the murderers. They are wicked, they are abominable. They are the wickedest people in the story of man and it is our duty to do what we can against them. . . .
> (*Lord Russell*, 1961)

Mr. Driver fails to see that these grotesque cries, no doubt believed by tens of thousands of marchers, were creating a climate of opinion, culminating in the "Spies For Peace" episode, which, like McCarthyism, could only end in either universal accusation or universal capitulation. And it well may be that future historians will consider it one of Mr. Gaitskell's greatest achievements that he was instrumental in breaking the CND as a political force in British life.

Secondly, there is a quite unjustified assumption that runs through *The Disarmers* that somehow the marchers were morally superior to those of us who believe in graduated multilateral disarmament through existing institutions. This conviction is linked to the odd, inverted anti-American nationalism that lies at the heart of the unilateralist case:

> . . . In Britain—more than in America, despite the possibly superior generalship of American peace movements—ordinary, non-specialised people have come to feel passionately that modern war is too serious a subject to be left to the soldiers or to the politicians. . . . Your average Aldermaston marcher, at least before the March became a predominantly teenage jaunt, could fairly pride himself with knowing more about the ills of the world and their causes than most of his peers and coevals in Detroit and Denver. . . .

Yet apart from ritualistic mentions of Herman Kahn's work, invoked in much the same way as Machiavelli and Clausewitz were invoked by the virtuous in other ages, there is no reference in *The Disarmers* to the fact that most of the basic pioneering studies of the problems of strategy and disarmament in the nuclear age have been written by Americans—Henry Kissinger, Bernard Brodie, Robert Osgood, Walter Millis, and others, who care just as much about peace as Mr. Driver, are just not mentioned in the text or bibliography.

BUT MR. DRIVER'S high moral tone is relatively restrained to that which informs most of the contributors to Mr. Boulton's anthology. Yet the book is well worth buying for Herbert Butterfield's long, moving essay on the problems of power and fear in the nuclear world; there are many new insights here which make the essay hard to forget. At the same time Mr. Priestley and Commander Stephen King-Hall have many sensible things to say even if one does not agree with their conclusions. But then there is Mr. Osborne's "Damn you, England" epistle ("This is a letter of hate . . ."), Mr. Christopher Logue's

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"poem" to his fellow artists which is to my mind the single, most incoherent contribution by a member of the anti-nuclear cause, and C. Wright Mills' attack on Christianity as "part of the moral defeat of man to-day." While Mr. James Cameron sends up the wvs civil defence both Miss Naomi Mitchison and Miss Marghanita Laski contribute stories about the holocaust which seem to have an avid, ambivalent concern with the ultimate horror, and Mr. E. P. Thompson, ideologue of the New Left, tells us that the Aldermaston marchers "are acutely sensitive to the least falsity or histrionic gesture." It only remains for Mr. Foot in his introduction to insist that CND by itself introduced the *moral* question into the great debate; and to tell us—apparently quite seriously—that the world's statesmen have conspired "to keep within tiny cliques" the truth about the bomb—the most widely discussed problem in human history.

Finally, perhaps one should mention briefly the most important flaw in *The Disarmers*—the inability of the author to develop any theory of international relationships which could justify the CND. Mr. Driver frequently makes it clear what he and the marchers think of NATO:

> ... As an organisation boasting at once the membership of Spain (*sic*) and Portugal and a specially composed hymn about the free world, NATO was in itself infinitely distasteful....
>
> ... Canon Collins, who was himself certainly no NATO-lover....
>
> ... NATO itself, although an odious, doomed institution in the minds of most campaigners....

Yet at the same time Driver has to admit that any weakening of the alliance as envisaged by the CND could be disastrous, the argument made from the beginning by opponents of CND: "CND never evolved a satisfactory answer to the objection that by upsetting the balance of power in the world so radically Britain would induce a jitteriness in the major nuclear powers which would make war more likely." Mr. Driver quotes the opinion polls to show that by May 1963, after reaching a peak in September 1961, public anxiety over the bomb in the U.K. was actually less than in May 1957 when the first British H-test took place. He goes on to complain that the British people are "extraordinarily phlegmatic about the risks involved" in the arms race; but surely the truth is that after the panic of Cuba week, the most spectacular result of the disarmers' activities, the British realised that the fate of the West was in responsible hands and that the balance of power is the best guarantee of peace.

NATO is odious, yet the Alliance keeps the peace; this is only part of Mr. Driver's confusion. In his final chapter he discusses the

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growth of disarmament studies and suggests that non-violence has special claims to our attention. Obviously, there is much to be said on this subject. Driver mentions, for example, the example of the successful resistance of the Norwegian teachers to the Nazis. But what about the fate of the resisters in Poland or Yugoslavia or Russia or France? Driver fails to see that the holocaust is possible not so much because of the existence of nuclear weapons but because in the 20th century power can be concentrated as never before by totalitarian régimes and that the Communist bloc has been waging a particularly intensive form of politico-military warfare against the West for the last two decades, so creating unprecedented international tensions.

What we want to know above all is why, for example, Khrushchev took such risks as he did over Berlin and Cuba; and thus for the central problems of our time Mr. Driver's analysis is irrelevant, thinking as he does that East-West tensions somehow arise spontaneously, and that, as Mr. Anthony Hartley once wrote of the CND in his *To an Aldermaston Marcher* in this magazine, some nuclear powers are more nuclear than others. Moreover, with Mr. Driver's boast that the dogs of peace can still be heard growling in the background, awaiting another opportunity, one realises what an ugly precedent has been established in British life by the long march to nowhere. Much better if the CND had never existed; and for the present we can only be grateful that President Kennedy's Cuban victory, the emergence of the Beatles, and Mr. Wilson's powers of patronage have between them converted the Aldermaston generation into the pop generation.

David Rees

AUTHORS

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PRESS

Arguing with Keynes

A Memoir — By KINGSLEY MARTIN

I WAS at my most brash and ridiculous when I first knew John Maynard Keynes as a Cambridge undergraduate just after the first World War. I was silly enough to ask him to make me a member of his famous Economics Society, though I knew not a word of economics and absurdly held forth about politics. He had forgiven, or forgotten about, this when I sent him what became my first book as a thesis for a King's Fellowship three years later.[1] He wrote me a charming letter to America, where I was a graduate student at Princeton, saying that I had written an "interesting, subtle and learned" thesis, that he had wanted me to be elected as a Fellow, and would I become a reviewer for *The Nation*, of which he had just become a proprietor? This was generosity itself. His letter served to persuade Beveridge to give me a job at the London School of Economics and it introduced me to Leonard Woolf, then Literary Editor of *The Nation* and to become my lifelong friend. I joined the staff of *The Manchester Guardian* in 1927 and came back, once more out of work, three years later. He seized the opportunity to merge *The Nation* into *The New Statesman* and I became Editor of the joint paper. He was fed up with *The Nation*, which had not done well under Hubert Henderson and Harold Wright, and he became a director of the *N.S. & N.*

He was in fact the only active director and he continued privately to write me many letters, agreeing and disagreeing with its policy, until his death in 1946. He was most careful not to interfere; only on one occasion can I remember him threatening to do so, and then he said he would resign if he was out-voted on the Board.

He had the swiftest and most powerful intellect that I have ever met and it is surprising that he found the time to see me so often and to write long letters when he was also making money for King's as its Bursar, building a fortune in the City, reorganising British ballet, writing continuously in all kinds of papers, and incidentally transforming the whole of British and American economic thought. His many disagreements with me make good reading today; nobody could express disagreement more savagely or effectively.

Roy Harrod, Keynes' biographer, remarks that "his connection with the *N.S. & N.* was much less intimate than with *The Nation* and, as the years went on, he fell out of sympathy with its policy." This is true as it stands, but misleading. During the years before the war he was in constant touch with its Editor, often discussed policy with him, praised and upbraided him, and wrote many articles and letters to the paper. Even during the war, when he was immersed in great events and again shaping policy at the Treasury, we saw each other with surprising frequency, though, as his correspondence will show, with increasingly little agreement. In the first days of our association Maynard constantly used the paper to expound his political and economic views. Harrod mentions his famous article on the revenue tariff, published on March 7th, 1931, but does not add that he followed this up with a two-column letter (March 21st) and further articles (March 28th, April 4th, and April 11th) with a violent attack on the Budget in September 1931, a further article on Reparations on January 16th, 1932, two more articles in 1933, and two in 1934, including an article supporting our view on Sanctions against Mussolini in 1935. In 1936 he took part in the great argument between Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, whose interview with Stalin we had published as a supplement. Between 1936 and 1938 he wrote, not, as the reader would gather from Roy Harrod, merely one article criticising our foreign policy, but several letters on foreign affairs and an article supporting Stanley Baldwin on the policy of appeasement, followed by one as a convert to collective security. He favoured frontier revision of the Sudeten area in 1938, but wrote an article furiously attacking Munich on October 8th, 1938.

I NEED NOT reproduce here the letters he wrote to me about economic and general policy where there was no controversy. I was not an economist, and provided we were sufficiently opposed to deflation he did not materially disagree:

> About a definite policy. The trouble, to my mind, is that there are no definite policies except a Tariff, Devaluation, or an assault on wages. Devaluation has its attractions, but I think any responsible person who has looked into it must reject it firmly, at any rate at the present stage. That is the dilemma which has forced me into the position where I am. For, apart from any other feelings one may have, an adequate reduction of wages is quite off the map and would, according to my theory of the thing, have dis-

[1] *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston* (published Allen & Unwin 1924. Republished with new chapters by Hutchinson 1963).

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appointing results. That may be true of the Tariff too. But it is more promising than the others. Don't feel that I in the least dissent from your decision to treat it as you have. I think you have very likely been right from the point of view of the paper.

Keynes felt that I had not been mistaken in asking Lionel Robbins to reply to his tariff proposal, and following this up with an immense correspondence which went on for many weeks. Most well-known economists and liberals in England contributed to it.

On the 1931 crisis as a whole, Keynes strongly supported me in backing the rump of the Labour Party. Indeed he wrote saying that this was clearly "the path of reason." He delighted Arthur Henderson at a lunch party by saying that he had a good Labour slogan for the election: "Hitherto the pound couldn't look the dollar in the face—now it is kicking it in the arse." Here there was no disagreement, even though he sometimes thought that G. D. H. Cole was somewhat extreme. My job as Editor was to see that Keynes, Cole, and E. H. Davenport, who wrote our City page, did not contradict each other.

An early difference of opinion showed itself about Russia. I never agreed with the Webbs, and had much argument with them, about their paradisaical picture of the Soviet Union. I was critical of Russia, because it seemed to me after so many years the Soviet Union ought to have been able to rid itself of the political police, and I infuriated Mrs. Webb by saying that a million would die in the Ukraine as a result of Stalin's land collectivisation.

But I never thought that a primitive country in its revolutionary period could be judged by the same standards as the western democracies, and I often took the Soviet side just because it was so misrepresented by capitalist newspapers. Moreover, in 1934, Russia joined the League and put forward a disarmament programme; nominally, at least, she stood for collective action through the League. If this peace policy was insincere, I thought the right line was to call the Kremlin's bluff, not to confirm its propaganda by refusing to test it. It was not, however, until the great purges that I became outspoken in my criticism of Stalin, not until 1937 or '38 that I remember being denounced as a Trotskyite by Harry Pollitt, in Trafalgar Square.

Keynes visited the Soviet Union with Lopokova, his wife in 1928, and the pamphlet he wrote on his return expressed views not unlike my own. I remember him saying that we must not be deceived by the "moral superiority" of the Soviet Union, but he could see nothing worth talking about in their economic experiment. On April 23rd (1933) he blew up because my first article on the Soviet trials seemed to be "apologetic" for Russia. I may not have meant it, but it worked round "as a defence of injustice." I had pointed to many parallels in other countries but he would

like to see for once the kind of leader which I would write if the Government in England were to do the kind of things in matters of justice and the suppression of liberty, or in the commission of economic errors in the same kind and scale as events in Russia.

I am sure that it is this endless obsession with grievances which completely spoils the effect of what you are trying to say. Although I know it would be injustice, I so often lately after reading the paper want to take up my pen and write to you "you seem to love a grievance and to love nothing else." And it makes it worse that running under the grievance there is a sort of subcurrent of defeatism, not the note of a crusade which is going to be victorious, but an undertone of "and I know nothing can or will be done about it." And towards any constructive effort on the modest lines which are alone practicable in the present world, your interest very soon gets tepid. You know that the Indian White Paper is broadly speaking the utmost progress which can be made at this stage; yet you are quite ready to inflame, rather than pacify, Indian grievances against it.

Well, all this means that you are really by temperament an agitator and revolutionary! No harm in that. And the more frankly you put that point of view the better I like what you write. But when, for my sake or the sake of others, you try to substitute for this, without yourself feeling that you lose your sincerity, a moderate and statesman-like demeanour, such as the best-minded Liberals would approve, it is then that the flavour which irritates me inevitably creeps in. Alas, it is when you are trying to be "good" that I feel like this!

This is all exaggerated, I know, and largely unfair, and do not, therefore, pay too much attention to it. But these are the easiest words I can find as a means of conveying from me to you what I feel. We must talk again as soon as we are both free....

We must have met and talked at some length. On the issue of Russia we did not remain seriously at loggerheads, and three years later I presume that both of us had, to some extent, changed our minds. He had become more puzzled about the trials and I more critical. He wrote on January 29th, 1937: "I thought your leader this week on 'Will Stalin Explain?' absolutely perfect. The argument convincing, the arrangement beyond criticism, and the style perfectly lucid, severe and to the purpose." He added, in handwriting, "I am absolutely baffled for the correct explanation. In a way the

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speeches of the prisoners make me feel that they somehow *believe* their confessions to be true."

LIKE ALL SENSIBLE men Keynes was violently opposed to another European war. His *Economic Consequences of the Peace* had made him the leading critic of the Treaty of Versailles. He had delighted us all, when we were young, by this, the most brilliant pamphlet of our age. It was not seriously challenged until the eve of the Second World War. It was written with great authority and was the basis for appeasement. It said, in effect, that a great country like Germany could not reasonably be expected to put up with Reparations as they were originally demanded, and that the political terms of Versailles were the seeds of another war. Moreover, Keynes' own record was that of a pacifist; he had registered as a conscientious objector opposed to conscription, in the First World War.[2] He remained a pacifist during the Spanish war; he rejected the whole Marxist argument, which converted Wystan Auden and his generation, and was driven back to a Baldwinian policy in which the only object was to keep out of trouble. He was fully alive to the basic issue when Hitler first came to power. On the 15th November 1933, he wrote:

> It seems to me that today's news about Germany cannot be taken too seriously. The hideous dilemma is presented—allowing them to call our bluff, and re-arm as and when they choose, with what results one can imagine, or the horror of a preventive war.

I had formally renounced my pacifism during the sanctions against Mussolini and fiercely supported the Government throughout the Spanish War. I had made up my mind that Fascism must be resisted, even if necessary at the cost of war. I thought the place to resist it was Spain, and that if it came to a question of facing Hitler openly our best chance was to organise resistance on two fronts. In short, much against my will, I came to believe in the Grand Alliance (as Churchill called it) or the Popular Front (as the Left called it) in foreign as well as in home affairs. The key to this policy was that we should be in alliance with the Soviet Union.

Keynes violently disagreed with this analysis. His view was purely national. He agreed, as a last resort, about the necessity of the Soviet alliance, but he did not support it until the policy of appeasement was played out. Thus, even after Hitler invaded Austria, when I had become a complete Churchillian, with many misgivings, Keynes remained a Chamberlainite, also with misgivings. At Leonard Woolf's suggestion I even made the proposal that Labour should accept Mr. Churchill as leader, with all that it involved in rearmament, and perhaps conscription. I was desperately arguing that it was absurd to run the risk of war against Hitler without Russia as an ally, while Keynes followed the usual pattern of the British ruling class, equally anxious to keep out of war, hoping that Chamberlain would succeed in appeasement, and then, when that was no longer possible, wholeheartedly embracing a simple British patriotism.

In the summer of 1937 Keynes had become seriously ill and was convalescing in North Wales. He wrote to me on the 1st July saying, "Lying in bed, I think a good deal about foreign policy, and some time this month I'd like to write you an article about it, if you'll have it." He sent the article on July 5th, finding our demand for collective security too much to stomach. He wrote strongly supporting Baldwin, and I wrote a reply. The two articles appeared side by side, and he subsequently wrote: "As regards Spain, I feel glad to have got a pacifist article into the paper—it must be the first for many months! And now we've each had our say I have no more to add unless something arises in subsequent correspondence. I still feel much happier with Eden as Foreign Secretary than I should with Brailsford, and so, I expect, do you." He added later:

> Are you quite sure—thinking twice—that you want non-intervention to come to an end? Is it your idea that the Spanish Government will be able to buy and import successfully more men and munitions than Hitler and Musso will send Franco free of charge?
>
> Is it your idea that the British and French Navies are incapable (or would you say unwilling) to keep out a single man or a single gun? I should like to hear the argument more fully developed—if you would stand this treatment.
>
> I am getting on very well here. They have discovered exactly what is the matter with me, which is a great thing, and it seems to be fairly easily curable.

We both, as he remarked, "had our say," his for appeasement, mine for collective security. He interpreted his objective as the end of the injustices of Versailles, while I regarded Hitler's offensive as not really having much to do with Versailles, but as being part of an aggressive policy which must lead to war unless we ganged up collectively against him. In a letter of August 9th he wrote:

> My progress is slow but steady, and I am now able to drive out in the car in the afternoon. Much sympathy with your affliction—and your bad temper. It makes you, I notice, just as cross

[2] This fact was not revealed by Roy Harrod in his *Life of Keynes* but in the *Economic Journal* of March 1960.

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now to think there is not going to be a war as it did before when you thought there was going to be one. There is no pleasing a really bellicose pacifist! They have got you both ways. And, as for Spain, I am not a bit sure that not making her territory the seat of a general European war is "letting her down."

Seriously, it all depends, of course, upon whether the Fascist powers are intending to use the present negotiations as a way of getting out without too much loss of face, or whether the plot is really something quite different, not yet disclosed. Being an optimist, I am still hopeful that it may end in the division of Spain geographically into two states. But, above all, I want the war to come to an end and not to extend.

In the meantime he had taken a strong line about resistance to Japan. On September 29th, 1937, he wrote to me:

As you may have seen from my letter in *The Times* to-day, I agreed very strongly with the article you had last week about economic sanctions for Japan. This seems to me one of the clear cases where decisive action is quite without risk, if sufficient join in, and certain to be successful; and there will be united public opinion behind it, (which last it is always necessary to remember is an essential prerequisite of decisive action). So I do hope you will go hammering on along that line. People are quite absurd, in my opinion, in underestimating the effect of economic sanctions. In the case of Italy, as we all know, they have never been honestly and decisively applied. If they had been, it would have been another story.

I have at last escaped from my Welsh prison, very greatly improved in health; though I am not allowed to return to real life for some little time yet....

In November he thought we had gone altogether too far. He wrote:

The first leader in this week's paper is apparently intended to incite China to a war to a finish, so long as any Japanese soldier remains on Chinese soil. At the same time, it holds out no hope that any effective assistance from outside is at all probable. Is there not some disastrous confusion of thought and feeling behind this? And next week, for all I know, you will be advising the Chinese to adopt the faith of Dick Sheppard.

I feel increasingly that the paper does infinite harm by its capacity for making the better cause appear the worse, and giving an impression of imbecile confusion of mind and emotion. Garvin at least has the merit that he makes the worse cause appear the worser.

A few days later he wrote, and enclosed a letter which he suggested I should show to my colleagues.

My own view is that we ought to have invited the United States to join us in imposing a boycott. I understand the reasons against this, though I am not convinced by them, namely, (*a*) that we are not yet strong enough, (*b*) that the general position is so critical that we must on no account risk any dispersion of forces, and (*c*) that public opinion is insufficiently homogeneous. It is also extremely likely that, even if we had taken the action I desired, America would not have responded.

Since, however, there seems no chance of a boycott, and China has saved her honour and her position and character as a nation, it is most advisable in her interests that peace should be concluded as soon as possible, even though it involves what amounts to her ceding a large area of territory. Finally, this being so, we ought to use all our power and influence to get her the best possible terms. It seems to me wicked to encourage her to continue, if any sort of tolerable terms are obtainable, and our duty to get her the best terms we can.

Turning to the wider problem, in my view, our sole and overriding purpose should be to make quite sure of countering the Fascist powers at long last. It is precisely because I believe the position to be critical and dangerous that I believe strategic retreats to be necessary and the gradual consolidation of forces absolutely essential. There is no chance except by achieving an almost world-wide consolidation of opinion on very broad issues. Such issues as an enormous majority of the people of this country, for example, and, one hopes in America, are ready to agree about. It is no time for being minority-minded, and those who are impenitently minority-minded are helping the enemy.

You, on the other hand, are perpetually engaged in conducting an indignation meeting, more often than not only secondarily against the enemy, and primarily against friends or, if not friends, at least potential allies, and thereby saving your soul and preserving yourself from all taints. I regard this as unserious and futile and playing into the hands of the enemy. Every sort of motive has to be mobilised on the right side, and the issue must be represented in terms which appeal to the great mass of opinion, as it is well capable of being. It is no good to spit and fume against the powers that be and all the real forces in the world, keeping in reserve, as the final expedient of escapism, throwing in your hand and lying flat on your face before the advancing forces.

I also have another feeling, which may be unreasonable, which ought to be mentioned because it plays a not unimportant part in my own mind. I cannot accept the policy of non-resistance, but I have a very strong objection to sending the average man to fight on an occasion, or at a time, or in circumstances whatever they may be, for reasons which only appeal to a minority. There are no issues on which the rights of the majority are so paramount as in the case of war and peace.

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Thus if the issue is to be joined, it must be for reasons which unite the vast majority of right-thinking men. It is this, and not sectional differences and heresies, or too nice an examination of selfish motives which should be one's aim.

Well, that is how I feel and why the paper so often strikes me as injurious to the better cause. I am not sure that I should not like to write publicly on these lines and leave you to expound the opposite in reply. That is, if you really believe the opposite, which I doubt. For I believe that what I am objecting to is due to an uncontrollable minority-mindedness and the old non-conformist urge to save *one's own* soul. But we are at a juncture of the world's affairs when these virtues are vices.

Our leader writer, Mostyn Lloyd, would, I think, have replied something like this: if we allowed each case of aggression to go by default as soon as there was danger of sanctions leading to war, then the smaller countries would cease to believe we were serious and when the world crisis came we should find that many of our allies had given up hope and were ready to make a separate peace with the enemy. (Maynard's remark about Dick Sheppard read oddly in view of his recent boast that he had succeeded in getting a pacifist article in the paper!)

MAYNARD's views had changed in March 1938. He had written an article proposing a geographic division of Spain as part of a general policy of collective security. This change was no doubt due to Anthony Eden's resignation and the deepening of the crisis. He wrote to me on February 23rd:

Yes, I am very glad, looking back, that I thanked heaven a few months ago that we had Eden as Foreign Secretary, and defended him from the charge of being a Fascist.

The gravity and importance of what has happened cannot be exaggerated. But if one is to try and extract any comfort from the disaster, I find a certain amount in the fact that the fissure of opinion has taken place at the most favourable point possible, leaving the maximum of weight and numbers to the Left. As you know I feel nothing more strongly than that in an affair of this kind it is useless to be in a minority. I do not reckon the chances of escaping from that position good, but they are surely better than they could have been with almost any other split, or on almost any other issue. That seems to me the point to emphasise—the necessity of consolidating as an effective force the *whole* body of opinion to the left of the Government.

But what a miserable figure the Labour Party cut in the debate. Not a single speech of bigness, dignity or importance. Nothing but stale debating points, and personal jibes.

I expect that the future has big surprises for us. I do not rule out the possibility of the Prime Minister having a genuine success on the immediate issue. If Mussolini was wanting an opportunity to back out of various commitments, this is clearly a heaven-sent opportunity for him to do so without loss of prestige. If so, I do not see how one can deny that it will be a benefit on the small stage of the immediate future. If this happens, it will confuse the issue, but, of course, it will not touch the main matter.

IN MARCH Maynard was finding the Prime Minister's attitude almost insufferable. He believed that war could be avoided and peace preserved by negotiation over Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately Chamberlain's tone still pointed to a kind of appeasement which he was no longer willing to accept.

The objection to the Prime Minister's speech is not so much what he said as his tone and the way he said it. Exactly the same things could have been said differently so as to make a very fine speech indeed. As it is, he manages to give the impression that he is not in the least moved by what has happened, that he will not live up to any of his professions, and that his sympathies are in the wrong place. And he is clever enough to spike opposition by putting forward proposals about which there is a large measure of argument or half agreement....

When, in the *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, I quoted a page of Shelley without acknowledgement, I was generally believed to be the author. I hope that the same thing will happen this time! There is another verse in reserve almost as apposite as the one I quoted.

Then went I to a garden, and did spy
A gallant flower,
The crown Imperiall: Sure, said I,
Peace at the root must dwell.
But when I digg'd, I saw a worm devoure
What show'd so well.

As late as August 26th Keynes still believed that war was unlikely over Czechoslovakia and said he agreed with me (I doubt if I ever said such a thing) that we should "bluff to the hilt; and if the bluff is called, back out." He wrote in a not always legible hand:

Yes, I suffer from much gloom about Czechoslovakia. The only morsels of comfort I can offer you are the following:—

(1) *Russia* is the key to the position. She will have to be the first to lend material assistance. (Will she?)
(2) Germany is *equally* vulnerable to air-raids.
(3) The Czechs unaided can give a pretty good account of themselves.
(4) The inevitable never happens. It is the unexpected *always*.
(5) In a world war Hitler will be beaten and knows it.

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I agree with you that we should bluff to the hilt: and if the bluff is called, back out. I prefer, meanwhile, meioses and bogus optimism in public.

The next day he bravely attempted prophecy:

Having put on my mantic robe and concentrated, my further reflections on Cz-Slo are—

Hitler's speech at Nuremberg will be violent and amount to a quasi-ultimatum demanding a revision of frontiers.

After many parlez-vous this will be granted.

He will again win the appearance of a major success.

And it will be without war.

What we ought to work for is a maintenance of Cz-Slo's integrity apart from frontier revisions. As a preliminary we ought formally to ask Germany her intentions and demand an international conference. If she refuses, invite collaboration of U.S.A.

On September 11th he was still backing the policy of frontier division.

Please don't imagine that I have weakened on the wisdom of frontier revision. Indeed the latest concessions are such as to make one feel even more than before that in the long run frontier revision is a cleaner and *safer* remedy. I was simply trying to be emphatic about what you say yourself—that it is plain as a pikestaff that at this juncture one must back up the Czechs, and particularly *not* suggest to Hitler that he can get what to him seems more....

I believe in living from hand to mouth in international affairs because the successive links in the causal nexus are so completely unpredictable. One does well to evade *immediate* evils.

I cannot imagine a nastier crew than your alleged conspirators behind the *Times* article—particularly Allen who has raised my nausea for years past. Geoffrey Dawson is a very *queer* personality and with a good side to him, however nefarious his methods.

I don't expect any resolution of these positions to-morrow. There is time yet, and there may easily be wisdom (as King Hall suggests this week) in reserving fire—though this is very unnerving to those not behind the scenes. If only one had ultimate confidence in Neville and Halifax!—which I at least haven't, though I don't yet reject the idea that they may be doing very well. Every day the force of world opinion is gathering force and the cup filling up.

I HAD MYSELF, on one luckless occasion, pointed out in a true but ill-timed paragraph that we should not be able to help the Czechs if we encouraged them to resist Hitler. This was an indiscretion which I never ceased to regret. But people have forgotten that the notion that Hitler would be satisfied, or that we might guarantee in some indefinable way the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia when the Sudetenland had been surrendered, was almost generally accepted. Duff Cooper, for instance, who resigned after Munich and became one of the leading anti-Chamberlainites, did not protest, as he makes clear in *Old Men Forget*, against frontier revision but only against Chamberlain forcing it upon the Czechs and accepting Hitler's word as a guarantee. Most people were in some degree inconsistent at Munich, their hatred of war and of Hitler and their consciences about the Czechs adding up to a very fair muddle about the whole issue.

Keynes' main feeling was that we had been tricked. Why all this alarm about war when Chamberlain was in fact on Hitler's side in the transaction? He wrote to me from Sussex on the 1st of October:

These are my basic reflections so far:

(1) This settlement would not have been too great a price to pay for peace. But with any sort of honest policy peace was never genuinely at risk. The pacific impulses of the nation have been shamelessly exploited and the final piece of stage management was as wicked as it was skilful.

(2) We have suffered one of the worst pieces of trickery in history. Honourable international policy has suffered a terrific reverse by the unscrupulous intrigues, quite unsupported by public opinion, of our own pro-Nazis. But they have played their cards so damned well, that more than usual of the wisdom of the serpent is needed on our part. (The attitude of the *Times* must have been revolting to almost everyone.)

(3) Russia (and of course France too in a different way) has been greatly to blame. Why on earth didn't she invite officers from our W.O. to inspect with their own eyes the Russian state of preparedness? There has never been any convincing evidence of Russia's reliability, and she has played straight into Chamberlain's hands, making it as easy as possible for his policy of ignoring her.

(4) It is *not certain* that the present settlement may not be a good thing in the long run. Viewed quite drily, there is a great deal to be said for it. Hitler's next move is not very obvious or easy. This makes our right reaction to it exceptionally difficult. The settlement itself cannot be rightly denounced as indefensible and monstrous. What is certain is something rather different:—namely that the sympathies and methods which have brought it about cannot be safely allowed to continue in charge. This time they may, by historical luck, have carried through a necessary thing which decent men could not have accomplished. This means that a frontal attack on the settlement itself is not the wisest course.

(5) I suppose that popular emotion will shortly be capitalised in the shape of a general election. The most important immediate political objective

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should be a union of forces against Chamberlain. This is much wider than a Popular Front and will require a very special kind of electoral strategy. I believe that this should be in the first instance purely *ad hoc* election, without any union or parties or much attempt at an agreed programme. It should be straight anti-Chamberlain, with liberal give-and-take in the constituencies, the most likely anti-Chamberlain candidates being supported by all of us irrespective of his party;—e.g. Winston, Eden, Duff Cooper, Boothby, Nicolson, and he should be unopposed by Liberals or Labour.

(6) One's own state of mind at the moment is painful in the way in which only a *mixed* state can be. Intense relief and satisfied cowardice joined with rage and indignation, *plus* that special emotion appropriate to the state of having been swindled; the whole nation swindled as never in its history.

He stated these views in the *N.S.* and wrote to me at the same time to say that he didn't think the debate had gone well for Chamberlain, that a General Election looked rather less likely and that he didn't agree that Fascism was strengthened in this country. He added, characteristically, "The damned thing about the settlement is that from our selfish and short-sighted point of view there is so much to be said for it. Good *may* result from what no wise or good man could have brought himself to accomplish. Vile and dirty work can be beneficial to those who do it—or do you believe in the eternal justice of the world? I don't."

KEYNES REMAINED OPTIMISTIC in 1939. He wrote in August, when things looked black as possible to me, "It is difficult to see how some sort of appearance of a crisis in the next month can be avoided, but I shall be extremely surprised at a warlike conclusion. . . ."

But Keynes was mistaken. We had made what appeared to me a fantastic guarantee and were involved in the war for Poland, which we could not fight. Without the Soviet alliance the war still seemed to be a continuation of the Munich swindle. I was not alone in thinking this. After the collapse of Poland we could do nothing to help. I found it a great responsibility to tell people that they must go on being at war with Hitler without any objectives stated. Lloyd George took the same view and began in a Sunday newspaper a campaign against "the phoney war." Bernard Shaw wrote a long letter to the *New Statesman* urging that we ought to give up the pretence of war and leave the Russians and Germans to come to terms. It happened that I had a proof of this letter in my pocket when I was with Maynard the night before we went to press. He was furiously angry and threatened to have the issue stopped by the censor if I were determined to print the letter. I left his house without argument. The next morning I found a note on my desk:

My opinion is

(1) that the article is mischievous and that your editorial judgment should be against accepting it; I think it would do harm both ways—both to the chances of success in peace and the prospects of success in war. And (2) that in any case you ought to take the advice of the Censor before publishing it (this applies not to the whole of the article but to one or two extensive passages in it).

If after re-reading it you want to proceed with publication, I agree with you that others should be consulted—the available members of the Board immediately and the other two as soon as possible. I should also attach importance to the opinions of Lloyd and Raymond. If I am in a minority, I still reserve my liberty of action but should if I used it resign from the Board.

From your own standpoint I believe the article would do great harm.

I recall my hesitation the next morning. Was Maynard right? Would Shaw's letter do harm? In the end I consulted my friend Charles Peake at the Foreign Office. He was strongly in favour of my publishing it. He said the censorship would place no difficulty in the way of publishing Shaw's views and that in saying this "he was reflecting the views of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who of course agrees that, so far as the limits of public policy allow, the opinions of all responsible writers in this country should be given the opportunity of expression."

In the end I published Shaw's letter, omitting only one passage which was unnecessarily offensive and did not alter his argument. He was delighted, and wrote warmly thanking me for publishing it. He asked me on the phone whether Keynes, who had had a long telephone argument with him about the matter, was "punch-drunk." He wrote off to Lady Astor saying that the war was over, as she could see if she dashed out and bought a *New Statesman*. The story, from Shaw's point of view, is told in Hesketh Pearson's biography. Keynes said no more about it, but the issue whether we ought to go on with the war which we could not fight was taken up by many correspondents and Keynes came back with the famous letter which is quoted by Roy Harrod and others. In fact it was primarily an answer to Shaw, and to all who were opposed to making war on Hitler without Soviet support. It read:

SIR, The Intelligentsia of the Left were the loudest in demanding that the Nazi aggression should be resisted at all costs. When it comes to a show-down, scarce four weeks have passed

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before they remember they are pacifists and write defeatist letters to your columns, leaving the defence of freedom and of civilisation to Colonel Blimp and the Old School Tie, for whom Three Cheers.

Our own suggestion was a conference to which Russia would be invited. Fighting Germany without Russia still seemed to us mad, as indeed it was. Shaw wrote characteristically, remarking that "as I am a born coward, and dislike extremely all this black-out business and ruinous taxation and the rest of it, I shall still want to know what I am fighting for. Mr. Chamberlain has cleared up that question to a certain point. He declares that we are not out for territorial conquest or material acquisitions of any sort. This means that the war is a purely ideological one. That is, we will not cease from military fight, nor shall our swords sleep in our hand, until we have forcibly smashed National Socialism in Germany and Communism in Russia, and replaced both by the British Constitution...." Keynes wrote further that he could not agree that a compromise peace on terms which were "reasonably satisfactory," such as we suggested, could now be made. He then added a remarkable sentence. "For myself, I am not yet ready to rule out the ideal peace. It may fall within our grasp in ways we cannot yet foresee."

FOR MY PART the war still seemed to be phoney and I reported to Keynes my conversation with Cabinet Ministers who thought we ought to "cease fighting Hitler and join with Germany against Stalin."

In May 1940, when the Germans were overrunning France, we had a Board meeting with one or two Directors present apart from Maynard Keynes and myself. We talked about the desperate situation. I had just been informed in the House of Commons that we had no weapons in the country, though we were hoping to get several hundred thousand rifles past the submarines on the way from the United States. I had also been informed that the Government had just decided that in the event of Britain being occupied it would go to Canada and carry on the war from there. We should be blockaded by the British Navy and bombed by British aeroplanes like the rest of occupied Europe. I started talking about this. (I was, in fact, correctly informed about the Government's plans.) Maynard turned on me furiously and said that people who talked like me ought to be in prison. After that we had a great argument—in a taxi, I think. I was declaring that the small nations would not resist Hitler, and Maynard denounced me as a defeatist. I am sure we both exaggerated. Maynard was angry, and I mainly depressed and stubborn in my unhappiness.

A few days later I went to Ireland and wrote, in a singularly black mood, apologising for my gloom but supporting my case. I also suggested that I'd better do something useful of a practical kind. Perhaps I had better put on uniform? I meant as a week-end Civil Defence man or something of the kind. Keynes took this to mean that I was suggesting my resignation, and wrote:

Your letter raises more matters and more intense ones than one can well deal with in a letter. I am coming back to town to-morrow and expect to stay until Friday, with plenty of free time. Meanwhile—

(1) I am sure that you are doing your most useful work where you are at present. I have felt that the paper has been useful, and it may very well get more and more useful as time goes on and the opportunities for independence diminish. It is good for you to work off more gloomy and desperate feelings on your friends, and they must not complain if you do so! I am *quite clear* that it is your duty to continue where you are....

(2) My objection to discussing remote (or I would rather say unclothed, since I do not mean very improbable) hypotheses is that it is absolutely useless and simply paralyses one for more urgent and necessary activities. It is absolutely useless because one has to know all kinds of unknown details in order to arrive at any decision of the slightest interest. You must not suppose, because other people do not spend their time discussing the worst, that such thoughts do not pass through their minds. Of course they do —but not, in my case at any rate, with that clarity in detail that makes them a proper subject for reasonable judgment.

(3) You are really deceiving yourself in supposing that you have prophetic insight into all that is going to happen. If in private talk one has predicted every conceivable disaster the imagination can conceive, when things go wrong something or other which happens can hardly help bearing some resemblance to one of the predictions. The particular one of which you remind me, where I said I thought your fears were absurd, has in fact turned out, not correct, as you now seem to think, but exactly the opposite of the truth. You told me, if you will throw your mind back, that the governments of all the neutrals were, to put it shortly, pro-German and that, at the first serious threat, or even without it, would allow themselves to be dictated to by the Germans. Indeed, you went so far as to say that even their sympathies were often pro-German. In fact the exact opposite has happened. Norway, Holland, and Belgium have come in on our side (which remains true even though they surrender). Surely you will remember that my reaction was that these neutrals might be terrified, might be blackmailed, might be de-

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feated, but to say that they were not sympathisers with the Allied cause was the absurdity.

(*4*) Of course, gaol is not the right remedy for people like you. That is to say, so long as it is only to me that they talk. If you put it all in the paper, it might be another matter! The right chastisement for people like you is to write every week with candour and encouragement, leaving your public feeling instructed, with fewer illusions and yet with more resolution....

In the summer of 1940 the bombs began to fall and all my miseries disappeared. The reality of danger was as reassuring as its anticipation had been nerve-wracking. I rather enjoyed the blitz. My trouble had never been fear of war, but misery about the responsibility of encouraging people to die for nothing.

In December 1940 I find little of interest in our correspondence, except a question by him whether "Crossman on the Bridgehead of Freedom" was not getting "dangerously near hot air?" in writing articles "suggesting that he has some concrete statement of our aims in Europe which will work miracles, for the announcement of which by Attlee and Churchill the time is now appropriate."

We also exchanged small discourtesies, Maynard suggesting that "some Freudian censor always forbade such good news as what is happening in Greece" reaching the level of our consciousness, and I replying that there was something Freudian about the fact that when the paper seemed interesting to many people his comments were confined to things that annoyed him. He followed this up on December 17th by saying:

> You will have discovered that in the meantime I had found something I liked! Your main duty is to criticise, and that makes questions of tone and balance so extraordinarily important. I so often find myself almost driven to dislike criticism, which in fact I think absolutely justifiable, and most necessary to make, by its environment, and especially by attempts to exploit the war in favour of something you want anyhow on the bogus ground that it will promote the winning of the war, when quite likely it won't. I think that the critic, if he is to be valuable in wartime and pull his full weight, has to maintain an extraordinary, and possibly impossible, urbanity of soul.

On February 6th, 1941, in a letter about the internal affairs of the paper, I wrote about "a quotation from J. M. Keynes to-day which I am sticking up on the wall of my room here:

> WORDS OUGHT TO BE A LITTLE WILD, FOR THEY ARE THE ASSAULTS OF THOUGHT UPON THE UNTHINKING.
>
> "I have this as a permanent weapon."

Keynes replied, "I had forgotten this lovely quotation, yet I am not ashamed of it."

On November 13th, 1941, I sent Maynard a pamphlet I had written called "Propaganda's Harvest." Its point was that propaganda had a lasting effect; the future was often shaped by what was only intended to deceive the enemy. It ended with a prophecy that some day the planning of Western economy and a modification of Eastern communism would enable East and West to understand each other and even to co-operate. Keynes' reply contained two pieces of information of historic interest:

> I have looked through your "Propaganda's Harvest" with much interest. It is a very good little paper. One minor correction. It was not Sir Auckland Geddes who talked about the pips squeaking, but *Eric* Geddes. He invented this perfect expression in an election speech at the Guildhall in Cambridge, during the Coupon Election, which was only reported in the local paper. It would have been entirely lost to fame if my mother had not cut it out and sent it to me, and it was impressed on my memory when I came to write the *Economic Consequences*.
>
> The phrase about the hard-faced men, which you quote, I stole from Stanley Baldwin, who invented it. I was sitting in Chalmers' room in the Treasury having tea on the first day of the new Parliament after the Coupon Election. Baldwin, who was then Financial Secretary and had the adjoining room, poked his nose through the door, as I can see him now, to us at tea. I asked him—"What do they look like?" And he replied in the famous phrase—"A lot of hard-faced men who look as if they had done well out of the war."

In 1942 I had become optimistic about the result of the war because it was now being waged on two fronts and Hitler had had the folly to invade Russia and to bring the United States into the war against him. From now onwards my correspondence with Maynard turned on the question whether a revolution in Europe was really desirable or not. The *New Statesman* had assumed from the beginning that capitalism could not be reconstructed after the war and that one of the important factors leading to victory would be a revolutionary underground composed not only of Communists, but also of Catholics, Liberals, Democratic Socialists, and patriots of all kinds. This collaboration actually came into existence. At the beginning of the war Dick Crossman and I had written an anonymous book called *A Hundred Million Allies if We Will*; we had urged that the creation of this anti-Fascist underground should be the object of propaganda. In 1943 the *N.S.* published well-informed articles by Dorothy Woodman, based on unpublished information about the beginnings of the Resistance Movement in different

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countries. The book that developed out of these articles was called *Europe Rises*. It seems thin to-day, but it was an astonishingly prophetic achievement in 1943. I held that the Resistance Movement was the key to any reasonably worthwhile peace after the war, and Maynard, who thought nothing of the kind, was quick to notice an element of insincerity in our argument. Was it true that a revolutionary movement was important for victory? Was not the wish father to the thought? The correspondence that follows is, I think, worth printing in full. I was right in believing that the revolutionary forces in France and Italy would eventually play an important part in victory, but it was only in Eastern Europe which was occupied by Russia that the revolution was carried out. This was precisely what I hoped would not happen. I had hoped for one Europe which would be Socialist but not Communist. I got instead two Europes divided by an iron curtain.

THIS ARGUMENT developed into one about the Second Front. I knew nothing technically about its possibility, apart from general information supplied by friends in the War Office and the Department of Political Warfare. They told me that preparations for a Second Front were constantly put off by ideological factors which, they declared, played an important part in deciding our strategy. Keynes took it for granted that Britain was sticking to Russia through thick and thin and that nothing but technical difficulties would prevent the Allies launching a Second Front as soon as they could and in the area where it would best serve its purpose in diminishing the pressure in the East. I feared that the Russians would not believe in our sincerity if our only Second Front was in North Africa.

Keynes wrote on August 28th, 1942:

> The real point seems to me to be this. You believe that it would greatly facilitate the success of the second front, when the time for that arrives, if meanwhile we were organising a Communist revolution in France, Spain, and elsewhere. Now, if you were to start by saying that, in fact, we are not organising a Communist revolution in European countries, you could point to formidable evidence in favour of the truth of what you say. I do not believe that Sam Hoare is organising or even encouraging a Communist revolution against Franco. We are, superficially at least, working in with De Gaulle, whom I have never heard accused of Communist sympathies. We are in very close touch with the Government of Queen Wilhelmina and Prince Bernhardt, and I never saw people who looked less like Communists; and so on.
>
> There is also another thing, which I think may be true. It is rather difficult to draw the line between encouraging or countenancing Communist revolution and making a mess of things generally for the enemy. There are very likely people who make decisions at a fairly low level who draw the line in a different place from where you would, and probably in a different place from where I should. But obviously it is not very easy, taking everything into account, to know just where it ought to be drawn.
>
> Now, if you will put it that way, namely, that we ought to be organising a Communist revolution in Europe in the interests of the second front and are in fact not doing so, one might not agree, but could not possibly object to this as a reasonable statement of opinion. But this is not in fact what you did say, and that still seems to me, on the basis of everything I know, quite balmy. I agree that my knowledge is far from comprehensive and probably covers a field which does not overlap very much with your sources. But in one or two subjects where I can check (I am afraid I cannot particularise further), I can from certain knowledge say that you are mistaken.
>
> I shall be interested to see whether in the near future the word does not go round quietly to drop for the time being the public agitation for a premature second front. But, of course, a premature second front has no connection with a second front at the earliest practicable opportunity.

AT THE END OF THAT YEAR I went to the United States and saw, amongst other people, Henry Luce, who was preaching "the American Century," and Henry Wallace who was making his bold and then unorthodox remarks about "the Century of the Common Man." I seem to have pleased Keynes: "I thought your article about relations with America in the paper of December 26th most excellent. It seemed to me quite an inspired analysis of the situation." This was a honeymoon. I was back home, justifying myself about the revolutionary movement and the second front, in March. Keynes wrote on April 1st, 1943:

> You have no idea what the plans are; you have no idea what factors affect the timing; if anything is going to happen in time or place different from what you wish, you have no idea what the compelling reasons are; so your propaganda-conditioned mind falls back on the one thing which is quite certainly false so far as this country is concerned, namely, that military events are "much influenced by an often unconscious fear of a Russian victory on the continent."
>
> It is, of course, true that there are many people in this country who think it would be much better if Russia does not have it all her own way in Europe and that we play a part which entitles us to have a say in what comes after. But how is

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it you cannot see that this works in exactly the opposite direction? The people who are over-afraid of Russian dominance are, of course, those who are most urgently concerned that we ourselves should be putting up a good show. The lunatic state of mind which you attribute to unnamed persons is absolutely non-existent.

I am not up-to-date about U.S.A. But I agree, as you know, that the American "big army" scheme does run the danger of being an obstacle to proper concentration on 1943.

However, I think that it is not so much your delusions I object to, but the kind of way in which they peep above the surface of the paper. Suppose you were to have an article saying straight out the sort of thing you say to me in your letter, I should of course disagree, but I might feel, as such things are being said below the surface, something to be said for bringing them up above it. If you were to say in so many words that people in this country in a position to influence military affairs were governed by the motive that they wanted Germany to beat Russia, not the other way round, everyone would know what sort of stuff they were reading.

But, of course, you are in fact much too sensible to write any such thing. You want to have it both ways—to appear in public as a more or less sane member of society, and to indulge morbidities a little out of sight, letting them however peep out in a disguised or ambiguous form. And that is what always upsets me so. I notice from your letter a further development of the malady. It now appears that an invasion of Europe only counts as a second front if it starts on certain parts of the coast of the continent, and does not count if it starts on other parts.

This argument was complicated by Keynes' increasing dislike of everything written by H. N. Brailsford. He was anxious to treat him with the greatest generosity for his past services but found his writing quite intolerable. He disliked the romanticism, idealism, and emotionalism, or whatever is the right word for Brailsford's worst writing. Brailsford had been in my view the finest British journalist of his time. He wrote magnificent prose, had immense experience, and was the most honest and honourable man I ever knew. Unhappily his extreme, almost neurotic reserve prevented any but a very few people from really getting to know him. Certainly Keynes was unlikely to share my deep affection and admiration for him. But I wrote to suggest, though with little hope, that Maynard and he should get to know each other. In fact Maynard already was writing early in 1943 saying that Brailsford's writing was "an old but increasing grievance" to him, and that he was astonished "how often things that brought the paper into general low repute and mockery (which are generally attributed to you, and for which, perhaps deservedly, you get most of the blame) turn out to be from his pen when I look at my marked copy." He summarised his view by saying,

> At bottom Brailsford is generally on the right side and espousing just causes. Yet the effect of what he writes is nearly always to arouse my worst feelings and detach my sympathies from what he advocates. There is no one such an expert as he at making the better cause appear to be the worse. One dislikes intensely seeing some of the best causes in the world so lowered in their place and their degree.

WHEN BEATRICE WEBB died in May 1943 I tried to get Bernard Shaw to write about her. He replied, characteristically,

> You are the third editor and not the last who has pressed me for a Beatrice obituary. I cannot do it, for two reasons. First, only the other day an article I wrote on the Webbs got a large circulation in the *Picture Post*; and Beatrice reproduced it in a pamphlet and an edition of a book which covered all the ground that the *P.P.* is too popular to reach. That shot my bolt as far as the public life of Beatrice is concerned. Second, I knew her too well and saw her too closely at home to get her into her distant perspective as a great woman. If I wrote about her intimately I should write gaily; and that would not have the funeral solemnity proper to the present occasion.
>
> Her ashes should go to Westminster Abbey, which is now much too masculine.
>
> I think you must write her obituary yourself or find some other competent understudy.

I took Shaw's advice and wrote an obituary article which pleased Maynard Keynes. In saying so, he added a delightfully sarcastic comment on my effort to be objective about the massacre of Polish officers.

> I am delighted with your account of Beatrice. It is excellent that you should be filling the paper with her this week and giving some proper appreciation of what she was. I have been dismayed by the futile and inadequate notices elsewhere, only mitigated by Maisky's very charming note. But that, of course, was too *parti pris*. I agree with your judgment that she was the most remarkable woman of our time. I wish I could do something myself for the *Economic Journal*. But it is hopeless to try to find time to do it properly just now. Perhaps I shall return to it one day after the war.
>
> I thought your handling of the Polish-Russian business last week just right. Naturally the Russians are indignant at having German murders passed off on them, when the knowledge that they have shot the gentlemen in question at quite another address has absolutely confirmed the falsity of the Smolensk story. And equally the Poles are indignant at having had, not 8,000 officers shot, but 16,000, 8 by one enemy-friend, and 8 by the other. But the weakness of the

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Polish case is that they have in fact known all about the Russian side of the business for months and even years.

From 1944 to 1946 our correspondence was naturally scanty. Lord Keynes was immersed in high financial politics. It is surprising that he found so much time for letters and conversations with me, mainly about the *New Statesman*. He was in Washington much of the time, and I wrote to him of a British correspondent in Washington telling me that he was awestruck with the brilliance of Maynard's performance at Bretton Woods.

In January, 1946, he actually had time to write a long memo on Bretton Woods. The most interesting corrections and additions to our "impressionist picture" were as follows:

> As an impressionistic picture, I suppose it is not more remote from the facts than what usually appears in newspapers. In the very broadest outlines it was all something like that. On the other hand, a good many of the details are quite inaccurate . . . particularly the following. . . .
>
> What is said about the absence of strong political leadership is, of course, quite true. But whether we should really have gained by the survival of Roosevelt is a matter on which I have never been able to make up my mind. If he had been in full health and at the height of his political power, the answer would probably be Yes. But, if he had just not died and the position in other respects was the same as it now is, we might have come off worse. Suppose Winston had survived too, undoubtedly there would have been brisk messages from one to the other, and very probably indeed Roosevelt would have used his authority to get us better terms. But the result of this might very well have been a repetition of Wilson and the League of Nations after the last war. If, in current circumstances, Roosevelt had offered us considerably better terms than those to which American opinion would readily respond, I fancy that Congress would almost infallibly have thrown them out. And then where should we have been? The advantage of the present set-up is that the Administration have, to the best of my belief, squared the people in Congress who really matter, so that, although there will [be] a great deal of noise when the loan comes up, it will in the end go through. . . .
>
> The Americans were extremely scrupulous, although most people here believe otherwise, in not putting financial pressure on us to exact political concessions. . . . There was great pressure on the Americans to associate the loan with civil aviation, bases, shipping, and any other matter in which any pressure group in America happened to be interested. Clayton scrupulously resisted all such pressure.
>
> We are not the only people in the picture. The Americans are much more conscious of that than we are. They want to give us very decidedly better terms than anyone else, but they do not want to have too obvious a discrepancy between the terms they give us and the terms they give others. In practice they are charging the French per annum during the early years about twice as much as they are charging us, without any waiver clause (I pointed that out in my speech, I think).
>
> What is prominent in my mind, but not easily emphasised in public, is that they treated us like gentlemen, that there was as intense a desire on their part as on ours that there should be no break in Anglo-American intimacy, and that they were doing their damnedest all through to give us as good a deal as their own perfectly frightful local politics would permit. . . .
>
> One final reflection. If the negotiations had broken down and we had not got the loan, I do not believe the Labour Government could have lasted a year. One sometimes wondered whether this might not be in the minds of some of those who seemed so complacent at the idea of things breaking down. I personally felt this as an additional reason for insisting on an agreement. It seems to me it would have been a real disaster if, for the second time, a Labour Government should be destroyed by an external financial situation, for which they could scarcely be regarded as primarily responsible. I should not care to contemplate the consequences of that when what had really happened had become perfectly clear. I doubt if the poor, silly Cabinet caught a glimpse of that possibility, or probability as I should view it, even out of the corner of their eyes. For I think most of them were almost completely oblivious of the prospective factual background.

On January 7th, I wrote thanking him for this long exposition, and saying that we had tried "to present the grim alternative to the loan." Clearly the alternative was "another blood, toil, and sweat period." The Government would need "great courage to put that over. It may have been impossible." Keynes replied:

> In my view a great deal more was at stake than another period of blood, toil, and sweat. If that had been going to lead to something eventually beneficial, very likely we ought to have been prepared to put up with it. My conviction is that the *consequences* would have been even worse than the *process*. A permanent splitting up of the world into separate economic blocs, of which ours would be far the weakest, founded on sand and almost certain to collapse within a brief period, would have been a major disaster, at any rate for us.
>
> I don't think people have realised that it was not merely a question of the alternative being difficult to attain, but that, in any desirable or acceptable form from our own point of view, it simply did not exist. There has been a great obfuscation of people's minds, mixed up with the general state of coma which now prevails and thriving only in the false paradise in which

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we live, about what our present position in the world really is.

Shortly before his death, he wrote:

> My appointment as a Governor of the Bretton Woods affairs is ornamental rather than otherwise. The chap who really does the work is the Executive Director and he is not yet nominated. It is really my own fault that I am going on my journeys again. But it is a case of a rather formal conference, with not much work, down in the South in the warm weather, and my doctor thought it would be a good idea to do. In addition to this, I had a sentimental feeling at wanting to be in at the birth of these institutions after having spent so much time and strength on them. I should not be away more than four or five weeks.
>
> I heard there was something in the *Daily Express* to the effect that I was responsible for you—which Heaven forbid! But I have not actually seen the text. Certainly it should be ignored....

Very few people kill themselves by overwork, but John Maynard Keynes did.

RE-READING our correspondence now, I see that on my side I was often defensively aggressive and in spite of strong language he showed much forbearance, friendship, and affection. He had much inside knowledge to which I had no access. My sources were not his and he was living in circles where my dissenting frame of mind was obnoxious. The root difference between us, I think, was that, like other Apostles, he was a mathematician and philosopher and never a historian. He was a Liberal and a member of the Establishment. He looked at each situation afresh, with the assumption that reason could more or less adequately deal with it when the facts were fully understood. He could believe in an "ideal peace." I was no orthodox Marxist, but I thought there was a historical process at work, and that a working-class revolution was, sooner or later, inevitable. I thought we could do comparatively little to alter the direction of the tide, and I hoped, after the war, that there would be a revolution, not Communist, but Popular Front in origin; it existed potentially all over Europe. The most important thing seemed to me to avoid quarrelling with the U.S.S.R. The future seemed to me hopeless if the West could not reach some accommodation with Soviet Russia; I hoped, prematurely, that Russia would become more liberal and accommodating.

Maynard was thinking how to save western capitalism by a technique which would prevent future booms and slumps. This fundamental difference only became clear in the later part of the war, when I believe he began to think me altogether too revolutionary. For my part, I did not become any less fond of him. I had lost most of my earlier awe of him and my affection for him had grown.

After his death I wrote a note of condolence to Lydia Lopokova. After thanking me for my letter, she replied:

> As you say, Maynard did not always agree with your views printed in the *NS*, but personally he was fond of you, and our evenings were well spent together, even when you threatened to leave the table, but you didn't, as you and he were such dear friends....

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EAST & WEST

The Case of Wolfgang Harich

A FEW WEEKS ago, the wife of one of the best known politicians in West Germany asked me: "What's that bright young friend of yours doing—you know, the one they sent to prison in the East—what was his name? . . ."

My "bright young friend" was Wolfgang Harich, twenty-seven when he was given the Chair of Philosophy at East Berlin's Humboldt University, and in Bautzen jail for the last eight years. One of the likeable things about our West German life here nowadays is that it is fashionable to be ill-informed and rather forgetful; thinking back is apt to be an uncomfortable exercise. "Oh, send them a parcel . . ."—it's less of a bother and there's a tax rebate to the bargain. Anyway, what does a young German philosopher go to jail for?

The eye of suspicion had already fallen upon the group of intellectuals who met in the *"Club der Kulturschaffenden"* in the heart of East Berlin on November 29th, 1956—the Soviet tanks were by then in Budapest, and Imre Nagy had been carted off along with Georg Lukács, his Minister of Culture, Tibor Déry, and many others. In the foyer of this former *Herrenklub* which Franz von Papen used to frequent, there sat, conspicuously inconspicuous, two men in leather coats. It's perhaps fortunate that secret-service agents all the world over seem to patronise the same tailor: you can always spot them by their hats or their ties. That autumn, 1956, leather was the style. The writers, artists, and journalists who had gathered together that Thursday evening for "a discussion" (if not exactly illegal, it was certainly inopportune) were forced to postpone their deliberations. The guest whose return from a visit to Rudolf Augstein, the publisher of *Der Spiegel* in Hamburg, they were awaiting (and who had never been known to wear a leather jacket) never turned up again. And that night the news of Wolfgang Harich's arrest went ticking over the world's teleprinters. Colleagues of the leather-coated and uninvited guests at the Berlin meeting had arrested him in his flat. And Rudolf Augstein (likewise arrested in West Germany in another cloak-and-dagger operation six years later almost to the day) ventured an arch prophecy that still awaits fulfilment: "Harich, my friend," he said, "my keyhole into the strange world beyond, let us hope they'll be kind enough to give you something for your bad stomach in jail, and if you want to be a stool-pigeon they'll make you fireman first and then perhaps librarian. You won't have to do your full stretch. . . ."

But at the time Harich's arrest was as much of a shock for the intelligentsia of the East as years later the *Spiegel* affair was to be for all thinking and democratic forces in the West. Harich was not the editor of a magazine with over a million readers; comparatively few read the *Zeitschrift für Philosophie* which he edited. But he was an institution. That night, Alfred Kantorowicz (then still in East Berlin) summed up in one phrase what everyone was thinking: "This is our Stalingrad. . . ."

IN HIS autobiography, *Child of Revolution*,[1] Wolfgang Leonhard has described the origins of this strange affair, so typical of Germany's post-war history. On the very day that saw the end of Hitler's resistance in Berlin, the "Ulbricht Group" moved into the *Reichshauptstadt*. On May 4th, 1945, Leonhard was at the door of No. 1, Podbielski Allee, Berlin-Dahlem, looking for the man who was down on Ulbricht's list as follows:

> WOLFGANG HARICH, *anti-Fascist student, cultured, interested in working for us in cultural organisations or in student movement.*

Harich already had a varied and active career behind him. Where the Ulbricht group got their lists and information is unknown, and no one knows how Harich's name came to be so designated. Vague tales of his imprisonment in the military prison at Torgau for subversive activities aiming at "disrupting the *Wehrmacht*," and about his share in a Communist resistance group in the years 1941–45 do not bear scrutiny. Harich was born in Königsberg in 1921, the son of Walther Harich (the writer and biographer of Jean-Paul Richter and of E. T. A. Hoffmann). He was seventeen when the war broke out. His upbringing—his grandfather was the National-Liberal editor-in-chief of the *Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung*—was in any case unlikely to make a Nazi of him. During his student years

As we go to press, we learn of the release of Wolfgang Harich from jail. His amnesty came after serving most of his sentence of 10 years imprisonment with hard labour.

[1] Wolfgang Leonhard, *Child of Revolution* (Collins, 1957).

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Harich preferred to drink at the well of "pure" philosophy; in the first year of the war he attended Nicolai Hartmann's lectures. Even then the Harich of the early post-war years was already clearly discernible—the child prodigy as proficient in dialectics as he was fond of being in the public eye.

Philosophical studies lasted only a few terms; the essential thing was to survive. Harich had his own special way of surviving: he got acquainted with Mishiko Tanaka, the Japanese wife of a German film star, and he remained in the Japanese Embassy until 1943. But by 1943 not even the "Buddhism" he then so piously professed could save him from the call to arms. He became a *Grenadier* in Potsdam and embarked on several vain attempts to bring his services to the Fatherland to a premature and illegal end. It was immediately before the fall of Berlin that a friendly, hospitable Siamese lady rescued him from the fate of defending the *Führer*'s last hide-out. The Siamese household in Dahlem had many advantages—not the least of which was its extra-territorial status. There (Harich had meanwhile gone through a militant Catholic phase and seriously considered joining the Order of Jesuits) Ulbricht's special emissary, Wolfgang Leonhard (future key-man in Pankow and refugee from the D.D.R.), met the "cultured anti-Fascist student."

EIGHT WEEKS LATER, in summer 1945, Harich stood beside the actor, Paul Wegener, and the poet, Johannes R. Becher, in the auditorium of the Berlin Radio as representative of the Berlin students, and one of the founders of the "*Kulturbund* for the Democratic Renascence of Germany." Thus was completed Harich's second conversion—to Marxism—and from now on he was to play an almost unlimited role not only in meetings, congresses, public lectures, but also in Party deliberations behind the scenes. Harich, who was regarded as the philosopher Ernst Bloch's star pupil, had at his fingertips so wide a range of classical and modern literature complete with ever-ready quotations (and such a grasp of the whole history of philosophy) that he was looked upon by his partners in these discussions sometimes as a monster, a child prodigy, and sometimes as a charlatan. His lectures on historical and dialectical materialism were a novelty in a field where novelties are by definition excluded; and his essays in 1950–52 in the *Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, although dogmatically pure, were at the same time artistically finished products. His liking for the world of the theatre (and its bohemianism) stemmed from the time when he used to write clever, wicked little notices in the West Berlin *Kurier* (and literary parodies under the pseudonym of Hipponax). It all seems so long ago now. The late, great Gustav Gründgens was still playing at the *Deutsches Theater* in East Berlin, and Ernst Rowohlt actually had a Soviet licence to publish books.

Harich went on as if unaware of the shadow that gradually encroached on his surroundings. All those rejected or frowned upon to-day in the D.D.R. were then still active: Bert Brecht and Ernst Bloch, Hans Mayer and Ernst Fischer, Gustav Seitz and Alfred Kantorowicz. It was a colourful palette with room for the frequently harsh brilliance of the elegant, quick-fire, and contradiction-loving Harich. His declaration of love to a beautiful West German actress, Hannelore Schroth ("I live only for Stalin and you")—the ear-boxing he received from Käthe Dorsch (the Vienna *Burgtheater* star)—the beer-coaster on which he scrawled during a reception at the Polish Embassy, "Otto Grotewohl is a ——"... it all smacks of boyish prank and pretence, yet it was all moving towards very deadly earnest.

AFTER 1952 things went from bad to worse, not only for the intellectuals but for everyone else as well, and Harich found himself more and more unequivocally at the spear-point of an internal Marxist opposition. For the orthodox Marxist, there is no blacker devil than the "revisionist." Criticism from outsiders is easy to refute by exposing it as *klassenfeindlich* ("class-hostile"): but what is to be done with those who know their Marxism, are adept in its application, and even perhaps understand it better than its own flunkeys? Harich was well aware how high the stakes were. Barely a month after the East German revolt of June 17th, 1953—it was, significantly, on July 14th—he published in the magazine section of the *Berliner Zeitung*, then still edited by Jürgen Rühle, an article that was outspoken and over-daring even for those giddy days just after the rising. In this article he followed Brecht who had waxed ironical over the grotesque ineptitude displayed by many Party functionaries in their self-criticism:

> *They maintained stoutly that they had erred; but, cudgel their brains as they might, they could not recall in what they had erred.*

Harich did not mince his words; he castigated the unholy dictatorship in matters of thought and opinion practised by "a small group of Party functionaries," and he managed to get the reactionary, fanatical Arts Commission liquidated. It is difficult for us now to imagine the struggle that raged in East Berlin in those

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days. For example, over the work of Ernst Barlach. The great exhibition arranged by the East Berlin Academy in 1952 was due to be called off and the special number of Peter Huchel's review *Sinn und Form* pulped. It took Brecht's direct intervention in the shape of his outspoken "Notes on the Barlach Exhibition" to save the whole enterprise from extinction. How grotesque it is then to find the *Berliner Zeitung* heading its report on a recent Academy exhibition of Barlach's works (in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death)—"OUR IMMORTAL POSSESSION." The same anniversary moved the Party paper *Neues Deutschland* to devote a whole page to the celebration of Barlach, even quoting from Brecht's "Notes," but giving out at the same time a dose of the usual Leninist balderdash of the "He-failed-to-see-how-things-must-go-forward" variety:

> There is however nothing in Barlach's writings or in his Ukrainian figures to lead us to suppose that during his journey he was aware of the organised popular forces which had just stepped so heroically on to the stage of Russian history. Neither the Revolution of 1905–7, nor the true forward-looking humanism of a Gorky existed for this German who was more interested in himself than in what lay around him. And just as the class-conscious Russian proletariat remained outside his ken, so was the working class of his own country alien to him. Most of his models are derived from those layers of society which were in those days called "the lower classes." But the industrial worker type is absent. So Barlach's humanism and democratic awareness fell short of the historical situation which was given its plastic expression in the work of Constantin Meunier and its graphic expression in that of Käthe Kollwitz. . . .

It is monstrous and yet at the same time bitterly logical that to-day Herr Girnus (in his day promoted to the Ministry of Higher Education and at present Editor of *Sinn und Form*) could have fifty packing-cases of books, the last trophies of his career, removed from the library of Hans Mayer (whom Girnus at the same time rather feebly satirised in *Sonntag* and for whose Chair at Leipzig University he was once a candidate).

WHOEVER TRIES TO FOLLOW all the twists and turns of this intellectual grotesquerie lands in some very murky alleyways. Thus, after Hans Mayer's departure from East Germany it just had to be a certain Dr. Kirsch who got all worked up at Leipzig over the "shameful act of treason." This Dr. Kirsch figures in the Leipzig University Calendar for 1937 with a dissertation on *Hans Grimm as Pioneer of Nordic World-view*, presented to Professor Otto Reche. At the time, Professor Reche was Director of the "Institute for Race Study and Ethnography" and joint editor with Heinrich Himmler of the periodical *Volk und Rasse*, having been since 1934 one of Rosenberg's collaborators and a member of the Frankfurt "Institute for Jewish Questions." In the indignant eyes of Professor Reche's trusty pupil, Hans Mayer must indeed have seemed a "traitor" and so must Wolfgang Harich; which is why to-day Dr. Kirsch is teaching Marxism-Leninism and Harich is in jail. . . .

IT IS EASY if one picks one's words carefully enough to make Harich out to be "a journalistic lightweight" and nothing more. Rudolf Pechel, a grand old man of anti-Nazi resistance and the famed editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, once described him:

> Harich is certainly a phenomenon as an intellectual. He has a capacity far beyond his years for assimilating and making virtuoso play with any and every branch of learning, all of which he absorbs effortlessly without ever having to do any honest hard work. What I found disturbing was his occasional shocking lack of tact; but I have a soft spot for children and was able to overlook his *gaffes* which I felt scarcely offset intellectual gifts bordering on genius. After all I reflected he would mature in this respect too. . . . His make-up, the cocktail of his qualities is badly mixed; the human substance under his gifts is exceedingly tenuous. He is, one might say, a pure homunculus, a brain walking about on two legs. It is easier to deal with a genius of this calibre when it makes its appearance as a chess-player or a mathematical prodigy; it is more difficult when he turns up as an armchair politician with a passion for writing pamphlets—in one word, a Harich. Like all insubstantial beings he requires an opponent to rub against and this can bring him to the point of committing intellectual sex-murder. All in all, amusingly naughty, a child prodigy among egg-heads. . . .

But Harich did much more than contemplate "intellectual sex-murder." He was one of the few German intellectuals who learned to draw consequences from ideas and who took the notion of "change the world" seriously. In his essay on "A Kantian Trait in Herder's Philosophical Thought" (written in 1953), he quoted this passage from Herder and everyone read between the lines:

> The spirit of change is the kernel of history. Unless one concentrates on distinguishing this spirit, on combining mentally the taste and character of each historical age and on walking the various pathways of history with the inquisi-

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tive and penetrating gaze of an intellectually insatiate traveller, one ends up like the blind, taking men for trees, and dines off an historical diet of empty husks which only spoil one's stomach. . . .

The voice may be Harich's but the words are Herder's. Soon, however, we were to learn that Harich could find his own words, without any help from Herder or Kant, Sartre or Bloch. Intellectually, even physically in need of breath, he tried to forge a freedom that was in no sense "in the pay of imperialism." How fatuous is the indictment brought against this man who actually wanted to publish his ideas in the S.E.D. theoretical journal *Einheit* and who (in the course of two long personal interviews) had tried to bring Georgy Pushkin, the Soviet Ambassador, and Walter Ulbricht himself round to his way of thinking! But the editor of *Neues Deutschland* had this to say:

> The means the accused intended to employ were thoroughly consistent with their criminal intent. As a first step, their counter-revolutionary demands were to be set down in writing as quickly as possible, with a view to making this available to a large circle of persons. To this end the document was to be sent to members of the Central Committee of the S.E.D., to all its regional and cell leaders and was also to be published in *Einheit*. Furthermore, influential circles were to be egged on to hold a conference of theoreticians for the discussion of current problems at which Harich's doctrines, carefully concealed until then, were to be promulgated and their acceptance urged. In this way it was hoped to win the support of influential people for these doctrines. . . .

So that was it—the means "consistent with the criminal intent." The Party's tame press was guilty of more than bad grammar; its arguments creaked as well. "Very urgent telephone calls were to be conducted in such a way that no one should notice their subversive nature"—as they put it in the indictment. We may well ask: who is "no one"? Not only in Bonn but in Pankow as well, the "specialists" were busy and lady telephone-tappers (on overtime) sat and knitted woollen shawls while they switched their tape-recorders on and off. But the trouble was, Harich had a habit of blurting everything out over the telephone. In the weeks before his arrest (during the Gomulka crisis and through the exciting days of the Budapest rising), I myself had telephone conversations with him in which we swore to each other to stick to our guns and promised to keep our "German Petöfi-Club" going. This caricature of a dedicated Marxist like Harich, a man who took himself and his mission seriously, into the stock figure of a secret agent scribbling away with invisible ink, with telephone numbers concealed on lottery tickets (as though anyone in his senses could imagine Harich playing the pools!) and suitcases with false bottoms stuffed with clandestine haberdashery—it was all part of a deliberate plan. The whole thing was concocted to discredit Harich who had overnight become the natural model for all the intellectuals in the D.D.R. Harich's own programme—which to-day, eight years later, sounds a good deal less revolutionary than it did and which in certain revisionist countries of Eastern Europe is already largely a matter of practice—was realistic and intelligent; and who knows whether the Russians would not have been glad to see part of it at least in action in East Germany to-day?

> We wanted to have our conception of a specific German road to socialism—and of a Marxism-Leninism cleansed of Stalinism—discussed and put into practice in perfectly legal fashion in the Party and the D.D.R. But this legality comes up against its limits at the point where the present party régime chooses to infringe that same legality. In our opinion the Party leadership has already diverged from the path of legality. This was demonstrated by the Third Party Congress of the S.E.D. when it saw fit to disagree with the XXth Party Congress of the C.P.S.U. Further evidence of abandonment of legality is provided by our Party leadership's attitude to events in Poland and Hungary. In our Party, in spite of all official assurances to the contrary, there is a systematic return to the cult of personality.
>
> In our Party, discussion is muzzled and the press is in fetters while every grumble of discontent uttered by the workers is labelled, in most un-Marxist fashion, as the work of imperialist agents.
>
> The following reforms are necessary in the D.D.R.: more of our production must go towards raising the standard of living. The norm system with all its attendant swindling must be jettisoned. A system of shared profits must be introduced into socialist enterprises and socialist trade. The law must be amended to extend the old-age pension to cover all workers, not just the white-collar ones. Premiums for shock-workers must be scrapped.
>
> In all socialist enterprises, workers' councils on the Yugoslav model must be set up; middle-class industry must be fostered and put on an equal footing with nationalised industry.
>
> Forcible collectivisation must cease as it does not suit Germany's special conditions; the L.K.G. must be liquidated if we are to avoid a catastrophe on the land; we must try to promote a healthy class of small and medium farmers.
>
> Restoration of complete freedom of thought. An end to the struggle with the Church which estranges the Party from the religious sector of the population. Restoration of autonomy for the

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universities. Complete restoration of the rule of law for all in the D.D.R. and liquidation of the secret police and the secret courts.

Creation of a system of government in the D.D.R. via an enlarged system of party blocs headed by a reformed S.E.D. Restoration of the complete sovereignty of Parliament.

Development of a foreign policy based on alliance with the socialist camp while retaining complete independence and equality of status. . . .

The U.S.S.R. is the world's first Socialist state. This is a fact which even Stalinism could not alter. But Soviet socialism cannot serve as a model for all countries, indeed it is no longer a serviceable model inside the Soviet Union itself. As things are today, it has become an obstacle in the path of further socialist development within the Soviet Union. . . .

How absurd it is that for proposing such things the 35-year-old Harich was sentenced to jail for ten years! Why is no one in Germany prepared to admit the mistake and try to undo the harm done? It matters little whether Harich is busy instructing his fellow-prisoners in dialectical materialism—that is to say, has become a kind of "ideological stool-pigeon" (and which of us can put his hand on his heart and say with certainty how he would behave in similar circumstances?), or whether he is still sitting in solitary confinement. When I say it matters little I do not mean for Harich himself —I mean for the public by and large and of interest only in so far as it regulates the amount of "sympathy" likely to be felt for him. What does matter, what matters very greatly and is of concern to all of us, is that Wolfgang Harich should still have to suffer from Ulbricht's personal animosity.

After being sentenced, he uttered a despairing epilogue:

> It was never my intention to use secret, conspiratorial and fractionalist subterfuges to get my ideas adopted in the Party and the D.D.R. It was only later and because of pressure of circumstances that, much against my will, I was forced to do this. I tried to discuss my ideas with leading personalities of the D.D.R., believing that I was dealing with fair-minded and honourable men, with whom one could talk rationally within the framework of the Party. Even when it became clear to me that it was not possible to discuss such things with them, I still clung to the belief that I was dealing with fair-minded and honourable opponents, from whom many things might indeed divide me but to whom I was still bound by common, ideological principles. What never once occurred to me was that I was dealing with a gang of idiots and criminals. Had I known this. . . .

Neues Deutschland had its own version. It published an epilogue which would still ring false even if it were genuine. Anyone who ever heard Harich talking or who has ever read any of his articles will know that he cannot have written these lines: "I have now gained first-hand experience of the Security services of the D.D.R. and I have found them very correct. This correctness of behaviour can be warm and helpful; it can also be chilly and unpleasant. The moment it comes into contact with the least sign of servility or of toadying—and in my own case there were stages, believe me, when I felt I wanted to cringe—then suddenly it becomes as cold as ice. It is clear that we have to thank the State Security Services for saving our country from considerable harm. But if I say that now, after doing what I did, no one will believe me. I do, however, express in this way my own personal thanks. . . ."

One does not need to be a "class enemy" to feel some doubt with regard to this effusion; all one needs is a feeling for style. Wolfgang Harich, intellectual play-boy, dialectician, philosopher and writer, the most brilliant brain among the younger generation of German Marxists, took himself at his word and acted according to his lights. But the new algebra had eluded him; his equation didn't quite work out.

Fritz Raddatz

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LETTERS

"Who Killed —?"

I REGRET that by an inexcusable slip I called Dr. Eisenschiml's book *Who Killed Lincoln?* It is called *Why Was Lincoln Murdered?*—an appropriate title for a brilliant example of the *cui bono* method so badly misused by Mr. Thomas Buchanan.

D. W. BROGAN

Palm Springs, California

Alsatian Purges

HAVING ACQUIRED an exotic form of expertise I welcome the rare opportunity offered by a recent article in ENCOUNTER to parade it. F. R. Allemann writes [ENCOUNTER, November] that "any [Alsatian] who had dealings with the occupying forces was condemned to death or sentenced to life imprisonment." He goes on to deny (via a rhetorical question) that "the 'purgers' . . . [could] grasp the indescribably complicated and varied motivations of people who had in any case always seemed to them 'potential traitors' and 'German agents.'"

In the judicial district comprising Haut-Rhin, Bas-Rhin and Moselle, out of 3,951 sentences handed down through the end of 1948 by the *Cours de Justice* which judged collaborators there were 81 death sentences and 379 sentences of life imprisonment. Throughout France less than a third of the death sentences pronounced were in fact executed; there are no figures available for this district alone, but there is no reason to believe that the proportion was different. Most of those sentenced to prison had their sentences drastically shortened by executive action; this, coupled with a series of amnesties, liberated most of those imprisoned for collaboration within a very few years.

The "purgers'" ability to appreciate the special circumstances in which Alsatians found themselves is indicated by the fact that while in this region the number of collaboration cases as a percentage of the population was *the highest* in all France (three times the median), the percentage of cases brought to trial and the percentage of death sentences were the lowest (half the median). No doubt in Alsace, as elsewhere, there were numerous injustices, but the notion that the Government was either arbitrary or insensitive to circumstances is simply false.

PETER NOVICK

Department of History,
Columbia University, N.Y.C.

Class Prejudice

DAVID MARQUAND seeks to show [ENCOUNTER, October] that the contributors to *The Rebirth of Britain* reveal "sheer class prejudice" calculated to appeal to the "status panic" of the old middle class confronted by the rise of Labour, and he turns an extract from my autobiographical note into an example. As his interpretation is the opposite of my intention, please allow me to quote the full text:

> "Before the war I was a member of the middle classes, but because I was educated at Charterhouse and New College, Oxford, and belong to a London club, I have, since the war, apparently become a member of the privileged classes.
>
> "I have, in fact, had to work for my living all my life and, useful as my old school tie has been in dazzling prospective employers, if I couldn't do the job, I was flung out: I was once in Lloyds Bank, but not after I had (inadvertently) locked my manager in the strong room.
>
> "Thereafter, I launched *World Trade*, journal of the International Chamber of Commerce, Paris; travelled widely in Europe as chief Paris correspondent of the *News Chronicle*; was created Chevalier of the Legion of Honour; covered the Spanish civil war, where my dispatches upset Franco who offered a reward for my capture (I can't remember how much he thought I was worth). In 1939, I became Director of Public Relations to the Government of India; in 1942, I inaugurated the Indian Information Services in the U.S.A. Then back to India to cover the transfer of power for the *Sunday Times*. From 1948 to 1953 I was in business in Calcutta. By then, I had (I thought) saved enough to retire, but I had not reckoned with the welfare state's continuous depreciation of the £, so in 1955 back to London to start a new career. Old school tie or not, nobody will take you on in the fifties, so my hobby, economics, became my only livelihood. My working week is 56 hours: enquiry suggests that this is about the average for an Establishmentarian in good standing."

This is a protest not at the *loss* of a privileged status but at having one *attributed* to me, which I don't claim and have never enjoyed.

Further, on page 251 of my essay I say: "Throughout history, the powers and privileges of castes and ruling classes have depended ultimately on their control of wealth. No society . . . has ever been entirely classless, but the more competitive a society the wider can wealth be spread, the greater is social mobility, and the nearer the approach to classlessness."

Elsewhere, I point out that substantial sectors—ranging from manual workers to middle-class doctors, teachers, colliery managers, etc.—have come to consider that once in a job, it is their status, as members of unions or as state employees, that entitles them to continued employment in the same job, in the same place, with automatic annual pay rises, irrespective of productivity, or the need for technological changes. Hence a major cause of inflation. It is in these non-competitive, static sectors that Mr. Marquand may find "status panic." If we all accepted the competition that promotes change and growth, preoccupation with status

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would be minimised and our living standards would soar with our exports.

Competition is, of course, not only compatible with severance pay, removal grants, retraining schemes, and pensions, but its contribution to growth enables them to be generous.

In a brief letter, these must sound dogmatic assertions. I hope that no one will be put off from reading the reasoned arguments in their support in *The Rebirth of Britain* which Mr. Marquand did not so much review as use as a peg for an interest-in *résumé* of his own philosophy.

JOSSLEYN HENNESSY

London

What Lessons for Africa?

A Reply—By Lewis Nkosi

NOWADAYS ONE DETECTS a certain tone of wry peevishness from the lone liberal warrior upholding single-handedly the banner of individual freedoms and parliamentary democracy in Africa. Though the tone strains towards self-pity, no doubt born of an acute sense of desperation, it is surely one of the most astonishing features of the times we live in, that we are not now permitted even the comforts of self-pity; from ourselves and certainly from the liberal warrior is demanded a show of moral toughness and an appropriate irony befitting, presumably, civilised humans living in the latter half of the 20th century.

The norm is currently one of self-doubt. However, if one is living in a dictatorship, as we are now fashionably urged to do in Africa, it will not do for the liberal to prove himself too virile in his concern for democracy or even in his personal style and self-awareness as a free individual. Moral fervour is certainly out.

Yet, I note with pleasure from the voices now imprisoned in South Africa, some belonging to friends of mine, that liberals—at least in South Africa—retain sufficient awareness to do battle for the freedoms they prize. I note too from Anthony Delius' article ["A View from Below," ENCOUNTER, September] that this liberal concern is not confined to South Africa where the freedoms are seen most to have eroded; but that there is real concern with the illiberal tendencies elsewhere in the continent of Africa. All this is to the good.

Still, there is that irritating peevish tone, especially in Delius' piece—irritating because the peevishness is made to do the work of analysis and argument. "The temptation is strong," cries Delius at one stage, "to give up the rest of the 20th century to re-learning the lessons of history that we seemed to know so well at the close of the 19th century." Who is *we*, for God's sake?

From such an elegiac pronouncement we gather what, indeed, we should have known all along: how lonely and desperate the situation has become for the liberal holding sombre vigil—what in future may even become a silent vigil—over waning liberal democracy in Africa. One truly commiserates with people like Delius; after all, around them is heard these days only the gay voices of assassins and murderers. From Cape Town to Accra is heard the click of keys as jails clandestinely swallow up men and women under Preventative and 90-Day Detention Acts. There are army mutinies, left-wing and right-wing insurrections. And as though to add an even more macabre touch to an already surrealist atmosphere, from Northern Rhodesia comes news of a blood-thirsty prophetess leading hordes of tribal warriors to battle against a lawfully constituted authority.

Conceivably, in moments like these, the tendency is strong (as is made so obvious by Anthony Delius) to see a pattern, to find concert or a unifying principle in all this, and even to cast Nkrumah in the same light as Verwoerd; but Dr. Nkrumah is not Dr. Verwoerd; and I think the temptation to draw such a seductive parallel ought to be resisted by honest men. It ought to be declined not merely because even a short stay in Ghana would make so gross an oversimplification of the two political situations an absurdity, but because one would rather see judges defrocked for upholding justice than prevented from assuming such duties on grounds of race and colour. The two problems are on different levels.

HAVING LIVED IN South Africa as a black man and having visited some of the countries which Delius mentions in the same aggrieved tone as South Africa, may I be forgiven if I observe here that the "lessons of history" of which Mr. Delius speaks so sadly were never learned from the beginning, certainly not by the British or even English South Africans at the turn of the last century. If it comes now, Delius' grief would seem a little belated to many Africans who are even at this moment messing things up. After all, it was a well tutored British Government emerging out of "the 19th century," which sold a black population down the Vereeniging River in 1910 with the consent of English South Africans, thereby strengthening the hand of the rural Afrikaners who are now riding roughshod over personal liberties in South Africa.

Despite its length, I suppose the thinness in Delius' article is due to the fact that in place of analysis and discussion which would have fully brought out the contrasts and similarities of the many political developments in Africa, he has chosen the easy way out—which is merely cataloguing the ills that are prevalent on the whole

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Life & Letters Today

New York

CERTAIN PAPERS *and magazines seem to go with certain places and occasions. The National Geographic is for reading in dentists' offices; the New York Post is for subways and the Automat; Life and Look are for barber shops; the Atlantic,* ENCOUNTER *and Commentary are for long train trips; the New Republic is for jet flights to Chicago....*

AMERICAN MAGAZINE

New York

COMPUTER *techniques are now available to strengthen the power of literary analysis and criticism enormously. But the humanities lack the money to put these tools to work. These conclusions were reached last week at a three-day meeting on literary-data processing held at the International Business Machines Corporation's research centre in Yorktown Heights, N.Y.*

The meeting was one attempt to help bridge the gap between the talked-about two cultures—science and humanities. Their meeting ground is in an attempt to develop computer programmes that can take some of the fuzziness out of the ideas and the language of literary criticism. Computer specialists, aided by computer-minded critics, propose to replace the old fuzzy terms with critical judgments that can be put into precise computer language.

At the session here, Dr. Sally Sedelow, of the English Department of St. Louis University, described computer work performed in an effort to find whether style parameters can be defined well enough to be programmed. She believes that they can be. A computer programmed by Dr. Sedelow has been used to search for the themes in Act IV, Scene I of "Hamlet." To her satisfaction, she reported, the machine found them. The programme can be used to search other literature, Dr. Sedelow believes.

NEW YORK TIMES

Moscow

AFTER *an on-the-spot study of the Siberian exile system, a special correspondent of the Moscow "Literaturnaya Gazeta" has concluded that it is not a proper means of re-educating offenders, that it is ineffective as a punishment, and that it is no longer even a good method of banishing persons dangerous to the welfare of society.*

The "Gazeta" gave some examples of the kind of harmless drone who has been streaming into the region and who, in its view, should never have been sent there. It described a certain Orlov, a "crank who drags a suitcase full of books on philosophy and astronomy round the town of Kargask, trying to read them to passers-by at every lamp post...."

THE TIMES

Ruleville, Mississippi

ALL DAY, *the Ruleville Negroes discussed the newcomers while they chopped cotton in the big fields. After dark, those who dared came to the mass meeting to see the volunteers. There, they heard Charlie McLaurin tell how he and four other SNCC (Students Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) workers were treated in Columbus, Miss., this June:*

"You're the niggers who are going to change our way of life," they said when they arrested us. They beat Jim Black, who was driving, with their fists and a blackjack, and took us all to jail. Then they made us come downstairs one by one so they could interview us. Sam Black went first. We could hear them beating him outside. He came back all swollen. Then Willie Peacock went, and then James Jones. And I was the last one left.

Well, I wouldn't go at first. But then I looked around and saw the others all beaten. And I had to go because they did. It was like I was outside myself looking in. Then I thought of our meetings and everybody singing: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." I walked alone down that winding staircase. And it was just like I was going into a valley of shadow.

At the bottom were two highway patrolmen. One of them pointed to the door, and I walked outside. They stood me against the wall. "You a nigger or a nigra?" one asked. "A Negro," I said. The other hit me across the mouth. Then he asked, "You a nigger or a nigra?" "A Negro," I said again. The first punched me hard on the ear, and I fell down. They took me by the shirt and the arm, and they pulled me up. I could feel two teeth were loose. The first patrolman asked me again, "You a nigger or a nigra?" I looked at their faces, and I knew what they wanted me to do.

"A nigger," I said. Then they smiled, because it was what they wanted to hear.

LOOK MAGAZINE

Strasbourg

SOMEBODY *in the city of Strasbourg has apparently decided that the very sight of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is offensive to President Charles de Gaulle. The French word for* NATO—OTAN—*was blocked from view directly across the square from the balcony where General de Gaulle made a major speech today. The name of a Strasbourg clothing store, the letters* OTAN *are mounted in six-foot-high yellow letters over the marquee facing the city hall. At 10.30 last night, hours after all French flags for today's celebration of the 20th anniversary of Strasbourg's liberation had been put in place, firemen covered the huge* T *and* A *with a Tricolor. Nobody would admit ordering this.*

N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

Westminster

SIR DEREK WALKER-SMITH (*Hertfordshire, East, C.*) *said he could understand why the Prime Minister should want to include in his Government an eminent writer of fiction. Think how useful he would be (he said) when it comes to drafting the next election manifesto.*

THE TIMES

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continent. No one can say that the list he has compiled is not an impressive one. Yet there are clearly dangers in such a juxtaposition of problems of differing natures and degrees. For instance, the racial tragedy in South Africa which may yet plunge the whole continent into a bloody devastation is made to appear similar to a silly complaint about Nyerere's replacement of British troops by Nigerians during the recent mutiny. This is like urging the U.S. Government to detail Negro Federal troops to enforce desegregation in Mississippi....

The hurried tone of Delius' article leads him to append many absurdities to an otherwise indifferent piece of political analysis. Pray, where is the logic in the following sentence:

> —Communism was nearly established on Zanzibar by whipping up the African element against the too-possessive Arabs, *in spite of the fact that the Arabs had been anxiously insisting for the last five years that they, too, were Africans.* [Italics mine.]

Isn't Dr. Verwoerd also insisting that he is an Afriman? So why whip up liberal opinion against him?

Before we all despair of African governments ever "learning the lessons of the 19th century" we ought not only to treat them seriously, but we ought to subject them to the same earnest intellectual analysis and discussion as we do other governments. And perhaps we ourselves ought to return to the former art which the 19th century practised so well: serious debate.

East-West Dialogue

YOUR series of ENCOUNTER dialogues between East and West—Spender with Lukács [December], Grass and Johnson with Simonov [January]—may well suggest, as you yourself very tentatively put it, "that we may be moving, if slowly and haltingly, to something approaching a frank and open dialogue...." The effort is certainly worth making. If the "thaw" means anything beyond local tactical relaxations of tensions for a hard-put Communist Party and State, it must (or, at least, should) signify the beginnings of a new cultural generosity, an intellectual tolerance. Even in inflexible East Germany there are signs of change; and this has been quickly followed by an uneasy loosening of the otherwise stiff, unbending cultural relations between the Western *Bundesrepublik* and the Eastern *D.D.R.* In many West German cities—and recently even in West Berlin—East German writers and poets have been lecturing and reading from their works. On the East German radio many well-known West German novelists (including Heinrich Böll, among other non-fellow-travellers) have been invited to do literary broadcasts.

But how long will this last? One has become, over the years, hard and sceptical. These new centres of contact cannot hold; the passionately intense worst usually emerges swiftly. Take the recent East-West German writers' meeting in Weimar. A whole delegation of the famous literary *Gruppe 47*, led by Günter Grass, was invited and attended. They insisted on their usual rules of discussion—namely, ruthless criticism with no holds barred, and soon one lecturer was criticised for an "empty talk," and another for "stuttering" (although Grass' reading of an Uwe Johnson manuscript was hardly more fluent—he explained he had lost the original copy where he had inserted the missing punctuation). Soon Johnson was the storm centre of controversy, and not surprisingly so for his career had begun as a "literary refugee" from the East. The Socialist realists attacked. H. M. Enzensberger defended. Everybody seemed to be about to man the barricades, but one was never quite sure which. The new Western dialecticians quoted Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Brecht, Aragon, and Lukács. The rather dull Easterners fell back on Goethe and Schiller—and of all things, the *M.L.F.* Grass was threatened with an *ohrfeige* (a box on the ears), but stood fast until a leading Communist functionary spoke not only of two German states but "two nations," and then he and Enzensberger walked out of the hall.

To be sure, at the end everybody who was left agreed on the necessity of "an East-West dialogue." But it was clear that only the younger generation of Germans, on both sides, could actually bring forward the necessary measure of mutual tolerance and respect. And maybe not even they....

RAINER KLAUS

Stuttgart

After Goldwater

THANK YOU for enabling our British cousins and others (including ourselves) to understand the current realities of the American political mind through Professors Hofstadter's and Lipset's articles [ENCOUNTER, October & November]. Their attention to the function of the Republican party of late recalls Thorstein Veblen's characterisation of that of the pulpit: "the accredited vent for the exudation of effete matter from the cultural organism."

GUSTAVUS TUCKERMAN

Washington, D.C.

INDEX TO VOLUME XXIII

The Index to Volume XXIII (July–December, 1964) is now available and will be sent, free of charge, on application to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket London, S.W.1. Standing orders for future indexes can also be accepted.

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Shell guide to Wales

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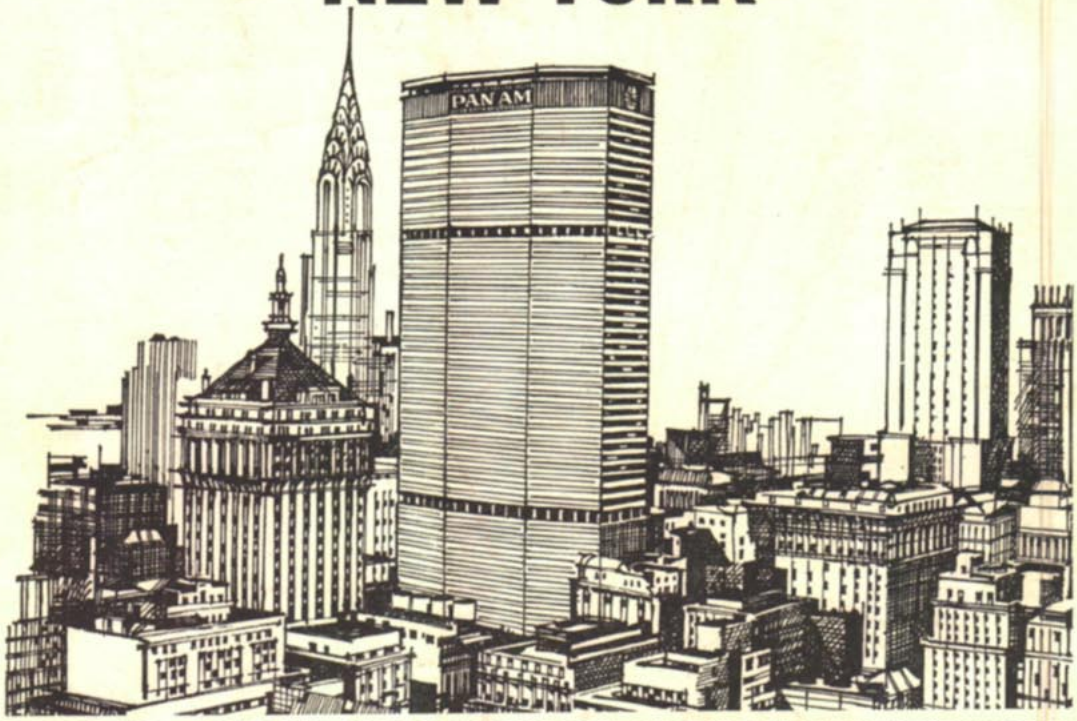

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